

Football FA Cup final: Arsenal 2 Newcastle 0

Red-hot Arsenal earn Double distinction

David Lacey at Wembley

THIS time the FA Cup followed the league championship to Highbury at the double. There have been more distinguished Wembley triumphs, but it is hard to remember a final being won with the sheer pace of Arsenal's victory over Newcastle last Saturday, or a success that owed so much to the contribution of a single player, in this case Roy Keane.

Unless Glenn Hoddle changes his mind, Parlor will not make even the outer fringes of the England World Cup squad. In the meantime, after his performance, the Arsenal man's early exclusion from Hoddle's plans will be as deep a mystery as the continued involvement of Iwan of Newcastle's Robert Lee.

Like David Batty, another England medium-pacer, Lee put in 90 minutes of honest toil on a stilling afternoon, but apart from Batty ruffing Patrick Vieira early on with a jarring tackle there was little to halt Arsenal's progress to a second Double. Parlor became the dominating influence as Newcastle's midfield was increasingly outlanded and overrun. It had speed but no pace.

The goals fell at all. Martin Overmars, released by a scamp from Emmanuel Petit, outstripped Alessandro Pistone for the first after 23 minutes. Nicolas Anelka, set up by Parlor's pass, outran Steve

Howey for the second after 69. Towards the end, Kenny Dalglish's heavy-legged Newcastle players were reduced to going through the motions.

England's football's eighth Double, and its fourth in 13 seasons, had never been in serious doubt. Realistically the only points at issue were whether Arsenal Wenger's side could reproduce at Wembley the quality of football which had accompanied their surge to the title and, if so, what fresh means Newcastle could find to stop them.

The answer was that, given the opposition's untrifling limitations, Arsenal played only as well as they needed to in the heat. There were times, particularly in the first half, when their passing became uncharacteristically slipshod and, though Anelka could well cope without the assistance of the unfit Dennis Bergkamp, the spectacle would have benefited from the Dutchman's cultured presence.

Wenger, already assured of a place in English football history by becoming the first foreign manager to take a team to the championship, now has a bar to go with his distinguished service. A long and lucrative contract at Highbury should be his for the taking, the Champions League less so.

It is 12 years since Kenny Dalglish helped Liverpool beat Everton in the FA Cup final to se-



Up for the Cup... Skipper Tony Adams lifts the trophy at Wembley

cure the Double as a player-manager. A week earlier he had scored the goal at Chelsea which returned the league championship to Arsenal from Goodison. How far away all this seemed as a Newcastle side shorn of the idiosyncratic but beguiling talents of Kevin Keegan's team trundled into action along predictable lines, like trains caught up in a Parramatta race.

Though the performance was nowhere near as subject as the audacious response of Joe Harvey's team to Liverpool's bewildering patterns of passing and movement in the 1974 final, Newcastle's followers went home feeling more disgruntled than ever.

Dalglish's success in manage-

ment at Liverpool and Blackburn is a matter of record, but the further his playing days fall behind him the more cautious he becomes. Pistone and Warren Barton were supposed to go up on Overmars, but the opening goal destroyed that plan.

Meanwhile the ease with which Parlor continually spat past Stuart Pearce became an embarrassment. Yet Newcastle did not try to carry the game to Arsenal until the match was more than half lost.

Dalglish's substitutions were more afterthoughts. The absence of an unfit Keith Gillespie condemned Alan Shearer to a Cup final without crosses. The England striker spent much of his time in lone and fruitless confronta-

tions with Martin Keown and Tim Allen, getting himself caught for a late infringement at the end of the first half.

The ease with which Newcastle came in the 60th minute, courtesy of Keown's heading on the 12th minute, seemed a cruel twist of fate. The ease with which Parlor continually spat past Stuart Pearce became an embarrassment. Yet Newcastle did not try to carry the game to Arsenal until the match was more than half lost.

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China puts brave face on HK poll setback

Andrew Higginis in Hong Kong

WHEN Asia's longest-serving ruler stepped to the microphone in Jakarta's Merdeka Palace last week to bow to an unstoppable momentum for change, Chinese television screens carrying the pictures from CNN suitably went blank. A fuzzy fog enveloped the live satellite images of President Suharto's surrender.

More threatening to leaders in Beijing, though, may be the images that flashed across the big electronic screens in the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Centre on Monday. They gave the final results of the first democratic election held on Chinese territory since the 1949 revolution.

Instead of concealing the vote, China's official media celebrated it. Indeed, the official New China News Agency (NCNA) scooped Hong Kong's electoral commis-



Asian values under attack... Students in Indonesia celebrate after President Suharto bowed to pressure and stood down after ruling his country for 32 years (see story page 3)

sion to announce a turnout of 80 per cent in last Sunday's poll. In a city supposedly neutralised by politics, nearly 1.5 million people have turned out to vote. The turnout not only confirmed Hong Kong's political principles of universal suffrage, but also showed that the city's values - an authoritarian creed jettisoned in South Korea, the Philippines, and most recently Indonesia, but still embraced in Beijing.

"People in the rest of China will be thinking, 'If Hong Kong can have such an open election, why not us?'" said Andrew Cheng, a leader of the Democratic party. "I don't think one country, two systems" can really work in the long run. We are all Chinese. Why should Hong Kong have free elections but not the mainland?"

The mainland media gave extensive coverage to the turnout but the media barely mentioned the peaceful protests of students whose demands for a more democratic parliament in China were met with a heavy-handed response. The Chinese students' movement in the Chinese students' union occupied Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Colin Cameron converted a penalty awarded after only 30 seconds when a Portuguese player, Steve Fulton, in the 52nd minute, Adam brushed past the somewhat Lorenzo Amoruso and scored. The goal was a long ball from the line off the goalkeeper Andy Goram.

Ally McCollet, who had replaced Stuart Pearce at half-time, pulled a goal back but it was Rangers' only impact on a final that was a rout.

Arms row follows Ulster's Yes vote

John Mullin

DAVID TRIMBLE, leader of the Ulster Unionists, signalled the next phase in Northern Ireland's political transformation last Sunday when he demanded a clear pledge from the Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, that the IRA was finished with violence for good.

Mr Trimble, buoyed by an impressive 71.1 per cent vote for the Good Friday agreement, said it was vital that Sinn Féin renounced its violent past. The Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, said the IRA was finished with violence for good.

Mr Trimble said: "The time has come for Mr Adams to deliver. It could start off with a clear statement that this separatist force is over and that there is a commitment to peaceful means that there will be no return to violence."

Northern Ireland voted 71.1 per cent to 28.9 per cent in favour of the agreement, which will involve electing a 108-seat assembly on June 25. Voters in the Irish Republic also overwhelmingly ratified the deal, though they were asked if they agreed to the republic waiving its constitutional claim to the North.

It was the first all-Ireland poll since 1918. The results came on the 20th anniversary of the 1978 rebellion, when Protestant and Catholicist joined forces against their English oppressors.

Mr Adams repeated his demands to meet Mr Trimble, who so far has refused to speak to him. The Sinn Féin leader wants to discuss this Sunday's annual Orange march at Drumcree, near Portadown, Co Antrim. He wants Mr Trimble, whose Upper Bann constituency includes Drumcree, to use his influence to stop the Protestant parade.

The march has sparked violent clashes for the past four years as the Orangemen tried to march down the nationalist Garvaghy Road. There are fears that this year will be the worst yet.

Mr Adams refused to talk about decommissioning weapons until after Drumcree. "You talk to me about decommissioning. Talk to me about that after July 1st. If these conditions are not met, I will be about it after the Tour of the North in Belfast. Talk to me if the RUC lack their way down the Garvaghy Road," Mr Adams said on Sunday.

Mr Trimble, himself an Orangeman, is on weak ground at Drumcree. He won the leadership of the Ulster Unionists in 1995 after his hardline stance in backing the Orangemen's right to march there.

Mr Adams, who said the significance of the peace deal was that the guns were silent, appeared to be attempting to deflect attention from decommissioning of weapons. It is the one issue that threatens the

How they voted

Northern Ireland



71.12% 28.88%
676,969 votes 274,879 votes
Electoral 2,175,433
Turnout 88.86% (2,011,643)

Republic of Ireland



94.35% 5.65%
1,442,583 votes 85,745 votes
Electoral 2,175,433
Turnout 88.86% (1,928,331)

working of the assembly and power-sharing executive. The agreement binds parties only to using their influence to try to ensure all paramilitary weapons are handed in within two years.

Although the deal contains no guarantees, the British and Irish governments have pledged to have decommissioning schemes in force by the end of next month.

Analysis, page 9
Comment, page 12

EU waters down arms sales code

California counts cost of dreaming

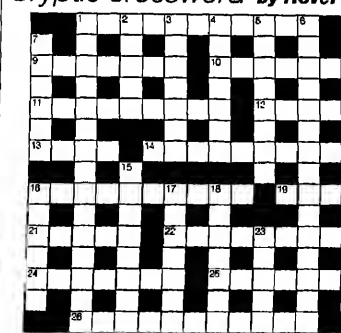
South Lebanon makes Israel bleed

The Pope takes on the pagans

Multinationals and their unholy pacts

Austria	AS 50	Meta	60C
Belgium	50F	Netherlands	G 60
France	50F	Portugal	5000
Germany	DM 4	Spain	300
Greece	DM 4	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	1,300	Switzerland	SF 3.00

Cryptic crossword by Rover



- Across
- Ball-girl who misses the trip? (11)
 - Barbecue still, perhaps? (7)
 - It could clear the ball (3-4)
 - With character? (9)
 - What the gondolier did with quiet song (5)
 - Nobleman in Pearly King's court (4)
 - Meet her of great potential (10)
 - Comedians making a big hit (10)
 - On safari, keeps at a distance (4)
 - What Romulus called his guardian constellation (5)
 - How a gully ran uneasily? (8)
- Down
- Cheeky kids who steal fish in person (15)
 - Coleridge was one who played for Surrey and England (5)
 - Mix-up when old Walter boxer faces a foe (1)
 - Outstanding, like some one expecting too much? (7)
 - Type of culted new puppy? (8)

Scottish Cup final: Heart of Midlothian 2 Rangers 1

Stout Hearts win the day

Patrick Glenn at Celtic Park

WITH the votes already in, Jim Jefferies did not have to win the cup to be named Bell's Manager of the Year. But steering Hearts to their first trophy in almost four decades was an achievement of the panellist's judgment.

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"I knew nothing would compare with this," said Jefferies after Hearts won the cup the first time since 1959; their last trophy of any kind had been the League Cup of 1962.

It was Jefferies's husbanding of meagre means which brought him recognition from the media as well as triumph in the cup.

Jefferies's extraordinary exploitation of the Bosnian ruling - he signed the Freighen Glen Roussiet and Stephen Adam, Stefano Salvatore from Italy, and Thomas Plogel from Austria - has allowed the club's directors to complete Tynecastle's redevelopment. Hearts are still in debt, but the progress they have made in the past two years has been phenomenal.

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2 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Innocent victims of free-market dogma

CONGRATULATIONS to Maggie O'Keefe on her moving article on the implications of free-market dogma for the health of the poor in Africa (She is three and suffers from a plague that kills millions — the plague of debt, May 17). I wish the campaign on debt relief every success.

It is worth remembering, though, that demands for debt repayments are not the only assistance that the international financial community offers to the grim reaper in Africa. The structural adjustment programmes that have swept through the continent in the wake of the debt crisis have been characterised by the indiscriminate imposition of free-market dogma. In the health sector this has been nothing short of a disaster.

Liberalisation of pharmaceutical markets has opened the floodgates for substandard and fake drugs, for over-the-counter sales of inappropriate medicines, and for self-medication with sub-therapeutic doses. Life-threatening diseases such as malaria are growing more and more resistant to treatment, while essential drug programmes, aiming to ensure rational and cost-effective use of the appropriate generic medicines, have been left in tatters.

Health markets are notoriously inequitable and are being reined in with managed care programmes even in the United States, but at the same time Africans are being forced to see health care increasingly as a financial transaction, with fee-for-services becoming the norm. In sub-Saharan Africa, the result remains empty pockets, precisely those places where they are most needed, because the fees are not affordable. Yet the amounts of money involved

are tiny in comparison with military budgets, or the overall debt burden, never mind the volumes of money available for the health of the poor in Mexico or South Korea.

When will the rich wake up to some of their responsibilities? *Granville Richardson, Sussex, Cambridge*

I WAS pleased to see the Guardian Weekly publish an article that highlights the plight of some of the world's neglected people, in this case Niger. But while it is good to make readers aware of such suffering, the report is not likely to stir up much action among the international organisations. Niger is, unfortunately, among the world's forgotten and neglected countries, long ago abandoned by the colonial powers, devoid of significant natural resources that might be covered by the multinational companies, and unlikely to be targeted for high-tech, expensive medicines to treat high-profile diseases.

The result is a shortage of simple medical supplies to treat what are normally controllable infections, together with malnutrition, the cause of the victims' underlying immune deficiency and a lack of clean water. Yet there are simple solutions to these problems. The amount of money it costs to organise and execute Bill Clinton's useless but much hyped anti-polio campaign would probably have been enough to fight the diseases discussed in the article. Cancellation of the repayment debt, a ploy used by the superpowers to divert attention from the inequities of US policy in Guatemala in the 1950s and Cuba in the 1960s, continued to form the basis of his case against Washington — which is probably an unfair assessment, given that Young himself cites the professor's elucidation of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment — it is worth remembering that whereas the means of extending Washington's diktat may have changed somewhat, the subjective aims remain the same.

The hypocritical, prejudicial and disinformation against Prof Chomsky raises his voice are rooted considerably further in the past than his message. While the intellectual left's inability to comprehensively posit a feasible and coherent alternative to capitalism gone wild is indeed a flaw that must be remedied, it is utterly false to suggest that it is specifically a post-cold war shortcoming for much of the left, the neo-Stalinist Soviet model was but an unattractive parody of capitalism.

Even more unpalatable is the implication — the "ethical" foreign policy angle, for example — that the left has little choice but to operate within the frameworks delineated by those who wield political and economic power. *Mohir Ali, Morristide, NSW, Australia*

However, I don't expect much action from these quarters. What about the World Health Organisation and the big aid organisations? They are probably too busy chasing after the fashionable "epidemics" and famines. *Richard Bond, BC, Canada*

THERE is a view that the industrialised states, the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank give money to Third World governments which they then spend unwisely or corruptly. The truth is that Third World countries do not actually receive money from First World "donors". Instead, "donor" countries provide loans to Third World countries to pay off earlier debts to "donor" countries. Third World countries do not have use of this money.

Another common aid cycle goes like this: a "donor" persuades a Third World "beneficiary" to accept a loan to pay for a project within the "beneficiary's" borders, the contract for which must be awarded to a company based in the "donor" country. Again the Third World country does not get use of the money.

By these and other means, "donors" never leave "donor" countries. The money is merely recycled among the "donors". *Hosna Jaffe, London*

Chomsky, present and correct

HUGO YOUNG's subtle assault upon Professor Noam Chomsky was both gratuitous and a trifle insidious. Prof Chomsky's "old, mediocre researches into the inequities of US policy in Guatemala in the 1950s and Cuba in the 1960s" continued to form the basis of his case against Washington — which is probably an unfair assessment, given that Young himself cites the professor's elucidation of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment — it is worth remembering that whereas the means of extending Washington's diktat may have changed somewhat, the subjective aims remain the same.

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HUGO YOUNG may well suggest that both Professor Chomsky's views that can be used within the "radical" persuasion are rooted in the past and dismiss them, but unfortunately he misses the point, ie capitalism works exceedingly well for a

tiny percentage of the world's population, but dooms the vast majority to a life of inequality and poverty. Instead of these "progressive-radical" views being fostered to travel the internet in search of confirmation, one could look at the same issue of the Guardian Weekly itself — page 1 (Plague that kills millions, the plague of debt), page 3 (Indonesia revolt turns to violence), page 5 (Liespan in West) and Page 14 (Why the poor are picking up the tab) — for proof that such a critique is more relevant than ever. *Richard Neal, Vancouver, Canada*

Still fighting old battles

WHILE I condemn the crimes against humanity committed by the Japanese military during the second world war, the A-Class war criminals were prosecuted under the Tokyo trial of 1946, and compensation was agreed and paid in the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1947 (The Week in Britain, May 24).

Why attach blame to those born after the second world war or those who were children during it? Emperor Akihito was only seven when Japan entered the war and it was neither his decision nor request to be given this Order of the Garter. Has Great Britain ever apologised or offered compensation for the Opium war? *CK Uekawa, University of Brighton*

Not so rosy for the workers

DURING her recent tour of India, not one of the victims of Japanese atrocities came forward to demand compensation for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar. *John Hadden, Mumbai, India*

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I WAS pleased to see the attention given to the new agro-industries in Kenya (Bloom or bust? April 10). However, the picture drawn by Fred Pearce of the businesses owned by Dick Evans and the like was unfortunately a bit too rosy. Claiming that people are being employed without wrecking their health is too much beside the truth. Giving regular medical check-ups to workers is not enough and will not protect the individual worker if the results of the tests do not bring about preventive action (other than laying off workers with dangerously high blood pressure).

A recent independent study among "well-protected" pesticide applicators from the large flower and vegetable estates revealed that these workers had their cholesterol level on average 30 per cent below their baseline level when applying pesticides. According to guidelines from the World Health Organisation, workers should be removed when this level is at 70 per cent of baseline.

Growing roses in the Netherlands may cost more energy for lighting and extra heating, but workers' health and the natural environment are not treated as consequences — as seems to be the case in Kenya. *Hans Kromhout, Mwanza, Tanzania*

GUARDIAN WEEKLY May 21 1998

Briefly

THE political debate in Germany still centres on the socialist gains in the state election in Saxony-Anhalt (immigrants targeted by far-right wing, May 10, but instead of an analytical approach to how to tackle prevailing racist attitudes and activities, the governing forces in Bonn — especially the Bavarian CSU — push us with only an ambivalent picture. Their rationale seems to be to integrate any anti-forgiveness propaganda spread by the far right DPA (German People's Union) into the current pre-election campaign. I doubt that the incorporation of extreme-right attitudes into German politics can under any circumstances be the answer to the phenomenal increase in racist attacks in this country. *Mirja Lindberg, Schinabach, Germany*

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Still fighting old battles

WHILE I condemn the crimes against humanity committed by the Japanese military during the second world war, the A-Class war criminals were prosecuted under the Tokyo trial of 1946, and compensation was agreed and paid in the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1947 (The Week in Britain, May 24).

Why attach blame to those born after the second world war or those who were children during it? Emperor Akihito was only seven when Japan entered the war and it was neither his decision nor request to be given this Order of the Garter. Has Great Britain ever apologised or offered compensation for the Opium war? *CK Uekawa, University of Brighton*

Not so rosy for the workers

DURING her recent tour of India, not one of the victims of Japanese atrocities came forward to demand compensation for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar. *John Hadden, Mumbai, India*

Not so rosy for the workers

I WAS pleased to see the attention given to the new agro-industries in Kenya (Bloom or bust? April 10). However, the picture drawn by Fred Pearce of the businesses owned by Dick Evans and the like was unfortunately a bit too rosy. Claiming that people are being employed without wrecking their health is too much beside the truth. Giving regular medical check-ups to workers is not enough and will not protect the individual worker if the results of the tests do not bring about preventive action (other than laying off workers with dangerously high blood pressure).

A recent independent study among "well-protected" pesticide applicators from the large flower and vegetable estates revealed that these workers had their cholesterol level on average 30 per cent below their baseline level when applying pesticides. According to guidelines from the World Health Organisation, workers should be removed when this level is at 70 per cent of baseline.

Growing roses in the Netherlands may cost more energy for lighting and extra heating, but workers' health and the natural environment are not treated as consequences — as seems to be the case in Kenya. *Hans Kromhout, Mwanza, Tanzania*

INTERNATIONAL NEWS 3

The Week

HUNGARIANS voted for parties opposed to the incumbent Socialist, opening the way for a centre-right coalition. Final results gave the Civic Party 148 seats in the 386-member parliament. The Socialists were second with 134 seats. *Washington Post, page 15*

TURKISH police arrested two gunmen and three others suspected of organising an attack on the human rights activist Akin Bircil. The suspects were said to be former members of an ultra-nationalist group.

TWO brothers convicted of killing the German tourists and their Egyptian driver outside the Egyptian Museum have been hanged in prison.

ONE of Israel's most prominent indigenous leaders, Francisco de Assis Assis, was shot dead as he was parking his car in a small town 240km from Recife.

A MILITARY court in China jailed two prominent opponents of President Laurent Kabila for violating a ban on political activity. The disgraced army chief, Moussa Nindanda, was sentenced to 20 years while opposition politician Joseph Olenghankoy got 15 years.

AN EXPLOSION devastated a church in Dumville, Illinois, injuring about 32 members of the mostly white congregation. A church 25km away was damaged in a blast earlier this year.

NEARLY 70 people died and 40 were feared buried after a severe earthquake shook central Bolivia.

MILITANTS wounding attacks, democracy and chaos broke up a student rally of about 2,000 students in Tahrir. At least 20 people, mostly students, were injured.

PAKISTANI army commandos overpowered three men who tried to hijack a plane en route from Bafuchistan to Karachi. It landed in Hyderabad, in Pakistan, but the hijackers were led to believe it had, as requested, crossed into India.

THREE new members convicted of murdering the Oscar-winning killing fields author Heng Ngor in Los Angeles in 1996 were given prison sentences ranging from 26 years to life.

FRANK SINATRA ordered that anyone who celebrated his life be eliminated. His widow Barbara will receive \$3.5 million plus three houses. Children Tina, Frank Jr and Nancy each receive \$200,000, and his first wife Nancy \$250,000. Frank Jr also gets the rights to Sinatra's sheet music.

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Suharto finally bows out

Andrew Higgins and Nick Cumming-Bruce in Jakarta

AFTER 32 years in power, President Suharto last week took barely three minutes to make his exit, finally retiring in a soft voice the way he had done so many times before. He had been on the streets since a country of more than 200 million people: "I have decided to step down as president of Indonesia, effective today."

Asking for forgiveness for "any mistakes or shortcomings", in a soft voice he was thanked for his role in the country's development. He had been on the streets since a country of more than 200 million people: "I have decided to step down as president of Indonesia, effective today."

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Anger as EU arms sales code is diluted

Martin Walker in Brussels

THE British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, on Monday announced a new code of conduct applying to the ethical foreign policy to arms sales. But he came under immediate attack from human rights groups for agreeing to French demands to water it down.

Under the agreement, reached at a meeting of foreign ministers, the 15 EU countries set out common standards to govern the sale of arms to non-EU countries. Under them, exports should not be allowed to states that might use them for external aggression, internal repression or supporting terrorism.

But France ensured that a verdict on human rights violations that would prevent arms sales had to be delivered by a "competent body", such as the EU Council of Europe or the United Nations.

This puts the threshold of evidence ominously high. Governments suspected of such violations have the power to refuse access to official meetings — as Algeria did to EU officials this year. Any formal verdict of human rights abuses could therefore be delayed, even amid media reports of violations.

France also ensured that the crucial "no undercutting" rule would be applied in private. This means that if a country seeking to buy arms is turned down by Britain, and then goes to France, Paris will inform London only in private that it is considering the request, rather than notifying all other EU countries.

While EU countries are to provide an annual review of their arms sales and a detailed annual report to the EU Council of Ministers, there is no guarantee that this will be published, as Mr Cook had hoped. That Oxfam's international director, Stewart Wallis, said: "Publishing the

annual report on arms sales is absolutely crucial."

The Irish foreign minister, David Andrews, said that he was "bitterly disappointed" the agreement did not include a binding ban on arms sales to governments accused of serious human rights violations.

Mr Cook, who presented the code of conduct as an important extension of his goal of an ethical foreign policy into Europe, hailed it as "a real achievement, a substantial step forward". He said: "The key criterion of this code is whether the arms are to be used for internal repression or external aggression. From now on, our arms industries will compete on price and on quality, but not on the standards that we will all apply on human rights."

Britain sells between \$4 billion and \$5 billion worth of arms a year, and France some \$3 billion to \$4 billion. Oxfam's international director, Stewart Wallis, said: "Publishing the

Georgians flee: clashes with Abkhaz rebels

James Meek in Moscow

CLASHES between Georgian armed groups and separatist Abkhaz fighters once continued this week despite a ceasefire agreement reached between the sides.

Georgia cancelled a military parade in the capital, and then reports of heavy armoured units in the move in Abkhazia as President Eduard Shevardnadze came under increasing pressure to strike back against the rebels who have sent a fresh wave of refugees fleeing the Black Sea province.

With Russian peacekeepers still a handful of United Nations observers caught in the middle, Abkhaz troops continued their sweep through the supposedly neutral buffer zone around the town of Gali, driving out Georgian partisans and emptying villages right up to the edge of the territory controlled by Georgian forces.

"The Abkhazians have orders to burn houses," an aid official's Tbilisi said. "But still they burn houses."

There are fears that what began this month as a clash between the Abkhazians and Georgian partisans could spread into a wider conflict, dragging Georgian forces and Russian troops into a repeat of the 1992-93 war, in which 10,000 people were killed.

Reporters on the Georgian-controlled side of the Inguri river, which marks the de facto border between Georgia proper and rebel Abkhazia, saw smoke around the village of Tagliani on the far bank and heard gunfire and explosions on Monday. Hundreds of refugees streaming across a railway bridge said the Abkhazians had overrun Tagliani.

There were reports that the Abkhazians were threatening to destroy a hydroelectric station on the river, controlled jointly by the warring sides, which normally provides Georgia with 40 per cent of its electricity.

There was speculation that the cancellation of the scheduled anti-terrorist parade might mean Georgian troops and heavy equipment were being transferred westwards.

Mr Shevardnadze barely escaped Abkhaz rebels in all likelihood with Russian backing, drove Georgian government forces out of the region, one of Soviet Union's last remaining strongholds.

Hundreds of thousands of ethnic Georgians fled, creating an angry constituency for forceful reconnection that has gnawed at the president ever since.



Georgians fled, creating an angry constituency for forceful reconnection that has gnawed at the president ever since.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 31 1998

Kohl minister plays the race card

Ian Traynor in Bonn

GERMANY'S powerful finance minister, Theo Waigel, last week accused a coalition of immigrants, and demanded the summary expulsion of foreigners found guilty of crimes, along with their families. He issued a resounding refusal to the multicultural society as Germany's election campaign increasingly turned anti-foreigner.

Mr Waigel, head of Bavaria's ruling Christian Social Union (CSU), the regional sister party in Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats, told a pre-election congress that Germany must not become "a country of immigration" despite the fact that

almost 10 per cent of the population are foreigners. While many of the 8 million foreigners resident in Germany are making contributions to the tax and welfare systems, the vast majority, many of whom were born in Germany, are denied the vote.

"We are not a multicultural society, we remain a German nation," Mr Waigel told CSU party faithful. "Those who abuse their right as guests have no business to be in the host country as guests."

The CSU's election manifesto, adopted last week, insisted that foreigners in Germany accept the country's "society and values". Germany's best-known writer,

Günter Grass, provoked a storm of protest and denials last year when he accused the government and the ruling parties of sponsoring and encouraging racist racism. But liberals will see Mr Waigel's speech as confirming the Grass charges.

All large west German cities are multicultural, with foreigners comprising up to 30 per cent of the population.

While declarations like Mr Waigel's have the effect of associating crime with immigrants in the public mind, figures to be released this week are expected to show that foreigners' criminality is decreasing. But their crime rate is inflated by up to a third by the inclusion of

offences against passport and asylum regulations, which do not apply to Germans.

By contrast, a recent report on political extremism from the domestic intelligence service showed that neo-Nazi crime and violence, including assaults on foreigners, soared last year by a third to its highest level since unification in 1990. Acts of neo-Nazi violence, including assaults on foreigners, went up by 27 per cent.

Campaigning on a racist platform, demanding jobs for Germans and the expulsion of foreigners, the extreme right German People's Union (DVU) shocked the political establishment last month by taking

13 per cent of the vote in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt, the strongest extreme right performance since the war.

Franz Schönhuber, the former SS officer and neo-Nazi leader, announced last week that he would stand in the September elections for the DVU. Both Mr Schönhuber and the DVU leader, the millionaire publisher Gerhard Frey, are based in Munich, the Bavarian capital. Mr Waigel's speech was undoubtedly aimed at stealing the DVU's thunder by appealing to at least some of its extremist supporters.

The opposition Social Democrats, well ahead of Mr Kohl and Mr Waigel's coalition in the opinion polls, are also playing the low road order and anti-immigrant card for fear of appearing soft and forfeiting votes to the far right.

Australians mark a Sorry Day

Christopher Zinn in Sydney

BOTANY BAY's national park is to be renamed in the interests of political sensitivity. The search was announced this week for an Aboriginal replacement name for Captain Cook's Australian landing place, so called in 1770 because of the strange plants that were collected on its shores.

The New South Wales state government announced the move to change the name of Botany Bay National Park as an act of reconciliation between black and white Australians.

The initiative came on the eve of Australia's first Sorry Day, a controversial event designed to highlight past injustices to Aboriginal families broken up by the former state and federal government policies of removing children from their parents. The events have largely been boycotted by the federal government.

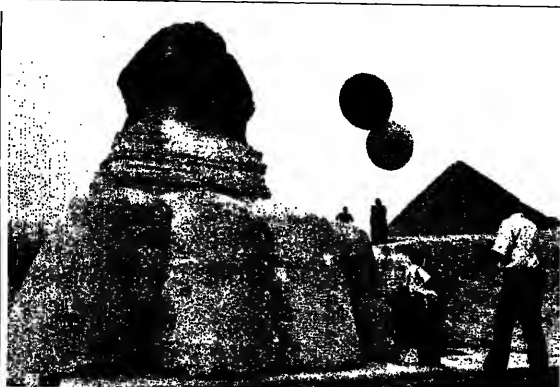
The Labor state government has decided the name for Botany Bay park — also the birthplace of white Australia — should incorporate indigenous words to encourage "healing" and understanding. One suggestion which tribal elders will discuss is Gillingim, the word in the language of the original Dharawal people that means "land that belongs to us all".

The environment minister, Pam Allan, said any name would have to be rich in meaning to all Australians.

The Botany Bay renaming comes amid a chorus of apologies to Aboriginals from officials, church leaders and police chiefs — with the exception of the prime minister, John Howard.

Mr Howard is standing by his decision not to apologise formally for the forced removal of thousands of Aboriginal children — the so-called Stolen Generation — from their families in this country. While expressing personal regret, he claims he cannot apologise for the actions of previous governments.

Sources close to the government have described the privately sponsored Sorry Day as a "giant trip which manifests disunity".



A man stands with balloons in front of the ancient Egyptian Sphinx in Giza last Sunday, a day before a ceremony to mark the completion of 10 years' restoration work, which cost \$3 million.

Switzerland owns up to 'dead gold'

Ian Traynor in Bonn

A SWISS government commission admitted for the first time that it had knowledge of the plundered gold channelled to the Swiss national bank (SNB) from Nazi Germany during the second world war came from concentration camp victims.

While the report by a panel of historians did not confirm whether the gold included fillings ripped from the mouths of camp inmates, it said it was beyond doubt that the scores of tons of Nazi gold included 119.5 kilograms smelted from the watches, coins and jewellery of Holocaust victims.

The amount of so-called dead gold mentioned in the report is less than estimates of some researchers and United States organisations, who contend that as much as 600kg of victims' gold was moved in Switzerland. But the figure was triple that suggested in a US government report last year.

The panel of historians from Switzerland, the US, Israel, Britain and Poland said in a 300-page interim report that the Swiss national

bank could not have known the origins of the gold. It had been passed by the SS to the Reichsbank, then to the German smelting firm Degussa for processing into ingots before being sent abroad.

But the bank came in for some unequivocal criticism of its wartime activities. From 1941, when the Holocaust got under way, its bosses were "increasingly aware that Jews and other persecuted groups were being robbed", the report said.

"In 1945, at the latest, the SNB had knowledge of the systematic extermination of victims of the Nazi regime. None the less, SNB decision-makers neglected taking measures to distinguish looted gold from the other gold."

The report estimated the Holocaust victims' valuables at \$82,000 Swiss francs at wartime prices, while the overall value of the Nazi gold handled by the SNB was put at \$280 million, the equivalent of \$2.5 billion at today's prices.

The report is seen as a crucial stage towards settling the two-year row between the US and Switzerland over the Nazi gold scandal. The

US is threatening to boycott Swiss banks pending lawsuits and argument about the level of compensation for Holocaust survivors or their relatives.

The SNB responded to the report by voicing regret that it had handled stolen valuables, but said reparations already agreed meant it did not need to take further action. "The bank regrets most profoundly that in accepting gold deliveries from the Reichsbank it may unwittingly also have acquired gold deriving from victims of concentration camps," its statement said.

The bank has already agreed to make 100 million Swiss francs (\$67 million) available to a humanitarian fund for Holocaust victims.

Jean-François Bergier, the Swiss professor who chairs the commission, said that the dead gold was "the most tragic, most emotionally charged" of the wealth plundered by the Nazis and deposited in Switzerland. He said the Swiss national bank had pursued a policy of "business as usual" with Hitler's bankers, although "it was clear that Germany was appropriating gold illegally."

Czech town plans to wall in Gypsies

A CZECH town plans to ghettoise several hundred Gypsies by building a five-metre wall around their blocks of flats to segregate them from Czech residents, *writes Ian Traynor*.

Senior officials in Prague said recently they feared the move could harm the country's image as it cut banks on talks for membership of Nato and the European Union.

But the town council in northern Ústí nad Labem seemed unrepentant, with one local official telling a Prague newspaper that the wall was being built for the Gypsies own good. Miroslav Hancinik said: "Why should one group of people be involuntarily exposed to such an unpleasant environment? I've asked the Gypsies and they said they wouldn't mind the wall."

The Czech Republic is home to hundreds of thousands of Gypsies or Roma, who are the targets of racial assaults. Many are stripped of Czech nationality.

The Human Rights Watch organisation in New York reported last year that Gypsies in the Czech Republic were increasingly victims of racist attacks. The organisation documented 27 racially motivated murders of Gypsies among 181 violent assaults since the Czech Republic came into being in 1993.

There was outrage in Britain last year after several hundred Gypsies from Slovakia and the Czech Republic arrived seeking asylum. Several thousand others travelled to Canada after a television programme about them they could enter that country and would receive automatic refugee status.

In many cases, Czech officials and mayors encouraged the Gypsies to leave, paying most of their travel costs in return for alleged pledges of renouncing Czech citizenship and giving up their tenancies of council property.

Former interior minister and 1998 re-electionary, Jan Ruml, said last week the plan to segregate Gypsies and Czechs with a wall was "absolutely wrong". The Czech Republic urgently needs a broad debate over its attitude to its Roma minority, Mr Ruml said.

Authorities in Ústí nad Labem argued that the wall, which will cost an estimated \$11,000, was a response to constant complaints from locals about "unhygienic" conditions in and around the two blocks of flats.



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Rude awakening for California dreamers

US DIARY
Martin Kettle

TWENTY years ago next month, voters in California set off a political earthquake that reverberated not just around the state, but around the whole of the United States, and across the Atlantic as well. When they passed the so-called Proposition 13, Californians not only abolished their own property taxes, but also raised the more general standard of a popular "revolt" that has helped to define politics in the US and elsewhere ever since.

Proposition 13 did exactly what most of the people who voted for it hoped: it cut their spiralling property taxes. But in doing so, Proposition 13 also plunged the state of California into financial crisis. The budgeted income of California's counties, cities and schools fell immediately by 53 per cent. As a result, services to residents were immediately cut back. Eligibility was drastically restricted. Many previously free services now came with charges attached. Long-term investment in the public sector all but ceased and local services deteriorated for lack of finance.

Whether Californians intended these consequences when they pulled in such overwhelming force behind Howard Jarvis's tax-cutting campaign in June 1978 — Proposition 13 was carried by nearly two-to-one — is probably doubtful. But today, though they now live with the consequences, a majority of the state's voters still believe that Proposition 13 was worth the price they have paid for it. In a poll by the Field Institute this month, 69 per cent said they would vote for Proposition 13 if it was put to them now.

Jarvis's triumph sent a signal to every American politician. Many states tried to emulate California, and several succeeded. Two more — Maine and South Dakota — will vote later this year on Proposition 13 based policies in an effort to join the club. But the bigger consequence of Jarvis's victory was that it redefined the limits of the possible in American politics. It carried Governor Ronald Reagan from California to the presidency two years later, putting tax cuts at the centre of the party's platform for the next decade. It revived rightwing, individualist politics in the US, Britain and elsewhere, and handed leaders such as Reagan and Margaret Thatcher a crusading weapon. Eventually, also, it was to compel a new generation of pragmatic left-wing leaders such as Bill Clinton and Tony Blair to abandon or scale down some of the most dearly held principles of their parties.

But if the passing of Proposition 13 appears in retrospect to be one of the epochal moments of late 20th century politics, there is little doubt that it also heralded an ongoing period of genuine political and cultural crisis in California, a state which had always seemed to flow and others to embody the future. For, as the US has often seemed to the rest of the world, so California frequently appeared to Americans — as a place of hope and plenty, where good times exist not, not in the uncertain future.

Everything is relative, but take 20 years ago when the Californian dream got very sour for many people. Nowhere is this more obvious than in education. California's schools, which had been had been among the best-funded and most successful in the US are now among the worst-funded and least



Berkeley College in California. Spending cuts in education have tarnished the state's once gilded reputation

successful. Twenty years ago California was roughly 10 per cent above the national average in spending per pupil; today it is about 50 per cent below the average, with predictable results.

This is not necessarily to claim *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, but there are many who believe California's decline to be intimately related to Proposition 13. Before 1978 the "ballot initiative" procedure which Jarvis so skillfully orchestrated was a fairly marginal and esoteric component of

the state's political process. Since 1978, however, the ballot initiative has become integral and professionalised. Increasingly controlled by rich companies and individuals, the ballot initiative culture now shapes state policy across a wide range of issues — from affirmative action to zoned car insurance, taking in education, the death penalty, the environment and gun control.

California's ballot initiative rules date from the state's "Progressive Era" government in 1911. By the

1980s, the number of ballot initiatives had dwindled to a trickle; throughout the whole decade, Proposition 13, however, initiatives have come thick and fast. The 41 initiatives submitted to voters in the 1980s were a record, but already in the 1990s there have been a further 49, with more to come.

On June 2 California voters will face five more initiatives, including Proposition 226, which aims to stop the automatic check-off of trade union dues by employers, and Proposition 227, which seeks to reduce bilingual education (mainly among Spanish and Cantonese speakers) in California schools in favour of English. Sponsors of eight more initiatives have already submitted signatures in the hope of getting their measures on the ballot in November. A further 32 ballot initiatives are currently being circulated.

As the number of ballot initiatives grows, so the cost of a ballot initiative campaign is also increasing. More than \$140 million is being spent on them this year alone, and the sum spent on ballots now routinely exceeds the already inflated cost of election campaigning.

Increasingly, the professionals believe, it is impossible to run an effective ballot campaign without the kind of funds which only rich or big business can command. Such spending does not guarantee success, of course. Proposition 99, an anti-smoking measure to increase tobacco taxes, was adopted in 1989, thus showing both that corporate money can be spent in a lost cause and that in certain circumstances the voters will support

the people's choice. But, however, suggest that Californians like the system, even though they see its weaknesses. This particular Californian earthquake seems set to continue, irrespective of the damage it may cause.

Last week I wrote that Barbara Boswell defeated Michael Huffington in the 1994 California election for the US Senate. In fact, she lost to Dianna Feinstein. My apologies

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Israel's Lebanese wound fails to heal

David Sharrock in Kfar Ouman

THE sharp report of three missiles slamming into the southern side of the Thura Kafe might once have shaken villagers, but Yusef and his friends hardly stirred in their claims as silence reasserted itself.

With the hills of south Lebanon has been raging wearily on for 20 years now, following its own rhythm of hit-and-run attack by the PLO, the Israeli-backed Shias, Hizbollah, and sudden reprisals by the nightmarish forces of Israel, dug into their self-declared 23km-wide security zone.

Yusef was scathing about Israel's constant but recently more urgent avowals of its desire to pull back behind the international frontier and end the war of attrition. "The Jews are liars," said Yusef as the house he was sitting in front of was raked by gunfire from the Israeli outpost on the hill overlooking them. "We support the resistance. Nothing will ever change until Israel leaves," he added in response to the latest Israeli offer to implement the 1993-United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 to pull out — as long as guarantees are given by the Lebanese to protect Israel's northern border.

Further south, Sheikh Nabil Kanak apologized for the delay. The military and political leader of Hizbollah's southern Lebanese command had been detained by the war effort.

"Last night was a little hot, the Israelis launched a new kind of rocket. It caused fire and terror among the people, but we are dealing with it," he said. "The hands of the United States government are covered in Lebanese blood. Why are the people not demonstrating against what is happening here?"

Denominations are taking place across Israel's occupation of south Lebanon, but until then I will do Israel's Vietnam. The body-bags come home for funeral funerals while a side of anger rises over a conflict that few understand or care about.

At Yafit, an Israeli military outpost facing the Lebanese village of Jastan, Captain Erez Melrovitch, aged 23, declared: "This is the Gaza Zone, where we have special rules. They can kill us and we can kill them, but Hizbollah can't cross the border."

It is indeed a special war, played by intricate and undisclosed rules of engagement. Deadly, but at times



Local Shias give a Vajna to incoming Lebanese soldiers in south Lebanon

PHOTOGRAPH BY NABIL SHAW

metaphorical. United Nations forces deployed in the zone said that Hizbollah attacks on Israeli forces and their proxy fighters, the mainly Christian South Lebanese Army, were at a 12-year high, yet the casualty toll was sharply down on last year.

"The Hizbollah are ringing some outposts with mortar shells, one in front, one behind and one in the rear. It's as if they're saying, 'We know where you are but take this as a message,'" said a UN official.

Captain Melrovitch took no comfort from Hizbollah's accuracy. "They change the way they work all the time. They fight very well and they know their work, but most of the time they lose. They are good, but not good enough."

"I try not to think about the politics and the protest groups. Like everyone, I know we have to get out of Lebanon but until then I will do my mission. I believe we will be here for a long time. Six months ago I would have said that we have to get out, but now I think it's a mistake to say that."

"It's bad for morale. My soldiers go back home, and their families and friends are saying it, and they bring it back with them. I hope they tell them what I tell them, that from the military point of view it's smart to be here. We should get out after we sign the right agreement."

"I can look out ahead of me and worry about my soldiers, some of

them now laying ambushes, getting wet and cold. But I prefer to look behind me, back down on all these villages in Israel, living peacefully. It makes you feel proud, that you're completing your mission."

Bigdady-General Elfi Fain, commander of Israel's Gollit brigade and a veteran of Entebbe, saw no contradiction in praising Hizbollah as a professional force with whom he could confidently sign a peace treaty — and describing them as the "apex of the Islamic world revolution."

"Those who say that a withdrawal would end the war are very naive. There is no difference between what we are doing here and what the free democratic world did against Hitler. We don't make war in Lebanon, we protect life out of necessity."

"Hizbollah is very rational, very disciplined. They are not crazy religious people with Messianic eyes. They are very practical people."

"The main factor of fighting this war is of gaining time. We are like a rock. We can stand here for a thousand years if that is what is needed to gain time for the politicians. Our job as an army is to convince the other side that hostile activity will bring them to a dead end. If we withdraw it will never stop, because they will say, 'It works, so let's press on.'"

Back on the other side of the Gaza Zone, Sheikh Kanak was equally confident of victory. "We will continue resisting as long as

there is occupation of our land. We don't foresee that they will withdraw soon, but they will use it and then Hizbollah will be victorious and glorious."

As for the Israeli general's fears that Hizbollah would simply export their revolution across the border if there was a withdrawal, the Sheikh offered no more than a tantalising sentence. "To help the Palestinian people doesn't necessarily mean that we will aid them militarily, but we do say that when there is an aggressor there must be resistance."

The Sheikh was acutely conscious of the impact his campaign was having on the Israeli public. "The more casualties Israel suffers, the closer we get to freeing our land."

Opposition groups appear to have made serious gains in Lebanon's first local elections in 35 years.

Rightwing Christian groups, which oppose the Syrian presence and the 35,000 troops in Lebanon, swept to victory in some parts of the Mount Lebanon governorate.

The Hizbollah won in its stronghold in Beirut's southern suburbs, defeating an alliance of its rival Syrian-backed Shia Amal Movement and candidates backed by the prime minister, Rafik al-Hariri.

Rightwing Christian opposition groups were reported to have won a number of municipal and mayoral seats in the polls, their first entry into the election arena since the end of the 1975-90 civil war.

Kurds wield television as a weapon

Chris Morris in Diyarbakir

AT SEVEN o'clock every evening a Turkish and her family gather round the television set in their small high-rise flat. Thunk! is a fuzzy satellite signal they watch the news in their own language. Kurdish. It is illegal, but they don't seem to mind; nor do their neighbours, who are watching the same programme next door. Technology has opened a new front line in the long-running war in southeastern Turkey.

"It would be very hard for the Kurds if Med-TV had not started," said Turkish. "We understand their programmes, and we like the news. They tell the truth."

Med-TV is a Kurdish-language satellite channel which broadcasts from London in open support of the violent Kurdish rebel group, the PKK. The Turkish government still bans all broadcasting in Kurdish, and it wants the British government to close the station down.

"I think it's the most significant thing the PKK has achieved in the last few years," said a journalist in Diyarbakir. "A lot of people who don't approve of their methods still watch Med-TV. It proves that Kurdish nationalism is alive and well."

Now the PKK and its elusive leader, Abdullah Ocalan, who is based in Syria, can get their message across to thousands of people every day. They no longer have to carry their fight physically into Kurdish-majority cities such as Diyarbakir, where the Turkish army has restored state control.

The real war has moved further away, to the mountains in the south-east.

The army says it has the PKK on the run. This year it launched one of its biggest operations yet, involving up to 50,000 troops backed by fighter jets and helicopter gunships. For the past few weeks they have combed the mountains north of Diyarbakir, hunting down what they call the remnants of the PKK.

Outfitted by better weapons and a greater understanding of how to fight a mobile guerrilla force, the army is confidently predicting the PKK's demise.

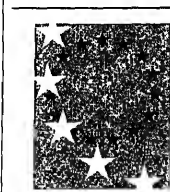
There is no doubt that the PKK has lost ground to the army in the past few years, but the price has been terribly high — thousands of people killed, thousands of villages forcibly evacuated and human rights trampled underfoot. Nevertheless the Turkish state is once again proclaiming a new dawn in the southeast.

"Things are going very well here," enthused Hakkî Urgan, the deputy governor of Diyarbakir, who is ruled under a state of emergency. "Diyarbakir is a normal city again." But the underlying causes of the conflict remain. Many Kurds still want greater recognition of their cultural identity, the right to educate their children in their own language, and a measure of political autonomy.

"They say they've won, but who have they beaten?" asked an official of the Kurdish political party, HADEP. "It's just propaganda. The Kurds are still here and nothing much has changed."

Undaunted, the army insists that it now wants to win local hearts and minds. It will have to compete with the message coming out of the sky.

Commission taxes British resolve



Europe this week
Martin Walker

WITH the single currency up and running, the single European tax regime is not far behind. The European Commission last week unveiled its plan for the first uniform measure, an agreement to close tax havens. Under the scheme citizens who have offshore or foreign bank accounts will face the cruel dilemma of paying a mandatory 20 per cent withholding tax or having their foreign bank account details forwarded to their national tax authority.

The plan, which has already been approved in principle by Britain, threatens the offshore tax havens of

the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Cayman Islands. The scheme of principle says clearly: "Member states with dependent or associated territories or which have constitutional responsibilities or taxation prerogatives in respect of other territories, commit themselves, within the framework of their constitutional arrangements, to ensuring that these principles are applied in those territories too."

The proposal may also affect the City of London's lucrative Eurobond market and zero-coupon Europe. (These latter say in bond interest, but roll up the annual gains into the capital of the bond. Most intend to treat these gains as taxable interest.)

The European Union scheme threatens to start a political row in Britain, with Tory MPs claiming that this is the first crucial step on the path to tax harmonisation across Europe, with Britain's low-tax status likely to be among the first victims. The warnings should not really be necessary. Europeans have made no secret of the grand strategy of a single currency leading to a single monetary policy and a single fiscal regime. After this, the arguments

about a federal Europe become moot, because with a single currency, common interest rates and then with a common tax regime, the commanding heights of a European superstate will have been seized.

Take two recent statements, one by Monti. During "in camera" testimony to the European Parliament's economic and monetary affairs committee, Monti said that European tax co-ordination was "going ahead like a missile". His policy, he added, was to harmonise European tax rates that "tax differences would no longer be an important factor in the decisions about movements of capital and labour."

The second comment, to come from a politician who, unlike Monti, was elected — Jean-Luc Dehaene, the prime minister of Belgium. The ongoing debate about tax co-ordination focused mainly on corporate and capital income taxes, is apparently of a technical nature, but is of the utmost importance: the issue at stake is nothing less than how to sustain the relatively high degree of solidarity which is at the core of our social contract.

When a politician uses the words "relatively high degree of solidarity" and "our social contract" in the same breath, he is talking of the need for generous social and welfare provisions, to be financed by

high taxes. And whereas in pre-Thatcher days there was indeed a broad, social democratic consensus in Europe supporting this aim, even the election of a New Labour government in Britain has not brought that old consensus back to life.

Government spending averages 48.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) across the EU, with a peak in Sweden of 65 per cent. Britain is at the bottom of the league table, with government spending totalling only 41 per cent of GDP. Any plan to harmonise EU taxes, while reducing the tax burden in countries such as Sweden, Denmark and Germany, would drive up tax rates in Britain.

THE DEMAND for a withholding tax began with Germany, which estimates that it loses the equivalent of \$16 billion a year in taxes through money squirreled away in foreign (usually Luxembourg) bank accounts. The French authorities have long fretted at the amount of taxable francs being driven across the border into discreet Switzerland. And with French and Belgian businesses re-registering as Belgian companies to take advantage of the UK's low taxes and social payments, the scheme has started to take on a faintly anti-British whiff.

Meanwhile the timing of the Commission's announcement means that the key decision will be taken after the end of Britain's six-month term at the Presidency of the

Council. For the next year, Austria and then Germany will hold the presidency, two countries keen to push ahead with tax harmonisation.

British officials made it clear that, if necessary, the Government would be prepared to use its veto in the European Council to defend UK interests. But they think, or perhaps hope, that should not prove necessary thanks to the special constitutional status of the monetary and taxation issues.

Monti said that the appointment last week of the UK Treasury Secretary, Dr. David Lam, to chair the EU Council working group on the UK's stated objective of "eliminating tax differences as a factor in investment decisions".

The war on tax evasion is the Mother's Day tax, nobody can seem to get it right. It is what is really at stake in the tax debate is the degree to which sovereignty and financial policy (and hence the political viability of a one-size-fits-all Europe) are being handed to Europe.

And this raises a further problem: the political viability of a one-size-fits-all Europe, and the country or region in trouble is no longer free to cash in the blow by "doing its own tax currency, leaving monetary control, and or reining monetary control, and are the affected voters and politicians to do? A "tax war" between the UK and the rest of Europe would appear to offer no way out.

"I'll never forgive them for what they put me through"

A man jailed for 12 years in Israel's security zone talks to David Sharrock

HASSAN had no warning of his release. After 12 years of imprisonment without trial at Al-Khiam jail in south Lebanon, he was suddenly free to go. He feels guilty about the 160 Israelis left behind.

Visitors to Al-Khiam, in Israel's 15km-wide "security zone", are rare. For 10 years the International Committee of the Red Cross was denied access, and was only allowed in 1994.

In 1993 Hassan was filmed and admitted access allowed. But Hassan, when 12 Israeli sol-

diers were killed in a Hizbollah ambush in Lebanon, the shooters came down again.

Hassan is the first person in nine months to bring news from Al-Khiam. Sitting up in bed in a Beirut hospital, he recalls how he lived for 12 years in a cell measuring less than 3m by 10m with 11 other prisoners — all detained without trial.

"I was first put in a room only 90 centimetres square and kept there for two months. I was tortured for months. Once I was kept without food and water for four days."

"I was questioned by the South Lebanese Army (mainly Christian) for 10 days. I was held for 12 days, but I was not

informed regularly to check up on everything. I was whipped and beaten with sticks; they attached wires to my fingers and genitals and electrocuted me."

"They would put a hood over my head and I could hear one man hand-cranking a generator, and another sprayed me with water until I passed out. I was starved and denied sleep for three months. Since then I have been beaten regularly, and they use psychological torture. They told me again and again that they would kill my family."

Hassan has no news of the 160 men he was held with. Hassan, 36, held in solitary confinement in 1988 Me Hissara, then a 21-year-old student, shot and

wounded General Antoine Lahad, the South Lebanese Army (SLA) commander. She has never been tried.

Israel denies any responsibility for Al-Khiam prison, claiming it to be "a south Lebanese prison facility". But the SLA directs all inquiries to the Israel Defence Forces.

The Hizbollah leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, has said the Lebanese prisoners may soon be exchanged for the remains of Israeli soldiers.

Hassan's release this month may presage a settlement. "But I shall never forgive them for what they put me through. Israel is the aggressor, but the SLA is doing their dirty work."

The Week In Britain James Lewis

Early departure for head of public prosecutions

DAME Barbara Mills resigned as Director of Public Prosecutions a year before the expiry of her contract, denying that she had been forced out by the Attorney-General, John Morris, before he publishes a damning report into the running of the widely criticised Crown Prosecution Service.

The CPS was in a mess before Dame Barbara, a high-flying criminal lawyer and former head of the Serious Fraud Office, was appointed to sort it out six years ago. She reorganised the service, but staff morale plummeted and the CPS is, if anything, even more widely criticised now than before Dame Barbara's appointment.

Police accuse it of slowness — and reluctance — in bringing cases to trial. Overburdened CPS lawyers complain that they cannot get on with their jobs because they are drowning in a sea of bureaucracy. And perhaps most seriously, judges have criticised CPS decisions not to prosecute police officers over deaths in custody. A drastic overhaul of the service is expected.

Although Dame Barbara was said to be more bureaucratic than her predecessors, seemingly impervious to criticism and unwilling to admit errors the likelihood is that it will take more than her premature departure to improve a service that is recognised to be rumbustious, underfunded and out of touch.

Two inquiries — one into the organisation and running of the CPS and another into the way it takes decisions on whether to prosecute police officers — have yet to report, but they are believed to have undermined Dame Barbara's position. They are also likely to cause problems for the Attorney-General when he faces the question — ultimately a ministerial responsibility — of how the service should be made more efficient.

IN CALLING for an inquiry into the running of paedophiles by local and national newspapers, the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, Lord Wakeham, drew timely attention to nasty outbreaks of 'vigilantism' which have led to physical attacks on sometimes innocent people.

The commission acted in response to complaints from the Association of Chief Probation Officers about the growth of newspaper 'paedophile registers' and campaigns to 'out' child sex offenders. Its chairman, Howard Lockwood, said there were too many cases in which newspaper involvement and heavy editorial coverage led to 'excessive public disorder'.

The probation officers' complaint is that newspapers' pursuit of paedophiles has driven offenders underground, making them harder to supervise and therefore making the public more, rather than less, vulnerable.

THE TROUBLED first year in office of Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, has so damaged his standing as to make him as unpopular among voters as Harold Harman, the Social Democratic minister who was given the thankless task of trying to cut benefits to single par-

ents. A Guardian/ICP poll gave him and Mr Harman a performance rating of 5 per cent.

The only two less popular ministers were Lord Irvine (7 per cent), the Lord Chancellor, who spent his last sums of money refurbishing his official apartments, and Peter Mandelson (10 per cent), the Minister without Portfolio, considered by many to have too great an influence on the Prime Minister.

Tony Blair, whose 48 per cent approval rating, breaks all records for prime ministers in office, was outscored by Mr Mandelson (44 per cent), the Northern Ireland Secretary, who impressed voters by plunging into the complexities of the peace process while still recovering from a brain tumour.

As he contemplates his first Cabinet reshuffle, Mr Blair will need to recognise that the three most popular ministers are Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, and David Blunkett, the Education Secretary.

Movin' profile, page 24

THE FIRST libel action against a UK-based Internet service provider (ISP) is being brought by Laurence Godfrey, a London lecturer in physics and computer science. He is suing Demon Internet Limited for defamation over a message posted last year on a Usenet newsgroup. A problem for Mr Godfrey, who is claiming £50,000 damages, is that he will have to prove that the message, which was a long letter to the Internet, was available to bookshops, printers and others, is not available in ISP organisations.

AN NEW FORM of surgery was claimed by a Bristol neurosurgeon, Stephen Gill, as the most significant advance in the treatment of Parkinson's disease for more than 30 years.

A neurostimulator, a pacemaker-like device, is implanted in the patient's chest wall, and four tiny electrodes are set deep in the brain. In the midst of a tremor the patient uses a hand-held magnet to send a mild current to the electrodes to block the over-active nerve cells responsible for rigidity and spasms.

So far 30 people have received the surgery, which is being seen as a long-term alternative to the similar L-Dopa drug treatment.

Austrian

I GOT HER A LEAVING PRESENT. SHE WENT HER MY FREEDOM.



Building for the future: 'Farmers are not the enemy, it's the biotechnology companies' PHOTO: ANDREW LEE

Activists take over field in genetic protest

ENVIRONMENTAL activists have taken over a field of genetically modified sugar-beet and plan a month-long occupation, writes Rory Carroll.

Up to 40 squatters are inviting the public to visit workshops and displays which warn that the untested technology could damage health. They said the occupation, on a football-sized field outside Norwich in East Anglia, was the first of many planned against an estimated 300 test sites in Britain.

Protesters set up camp last weekend. Norfolk police arrived 40 minutes later to see the first signs of a kitchen, visitors' centre, toilets and organic garden.

Assured that it was a peaceful trespass against 'Frankenstein food', four officers kept watch while barrels of water, a kettle, stove and rucksacks were lifted over a high wire mesh. A synthetic local contractor supplied free food.

No prosecutions for criminal damage to the sugar-beet had been made because an unknown group destroyed the crop weeks before the protesters arrived. A court order for eviction, which the landlord is considering, may take weeks to obtain.

The month-long stay is intended to prevent replanting and force the firm to negotiate. A European contract that forbids genetic material from one species to another could create new toxins.

'Farmers are not the enemy, it's the biotechnology companies who want to make billions,' said Paul, planning a Jolly Roger flag for the protesters. 'This is a message to them, to act off.'

Nurses freed amid media frenzy

Guardian Reporters

TWO British nurses jailed in Saudi Arabia after the murder of a colleague were paroled and freed last week by the country's ruler, King Fahd. They flew back to Britain and a media storm as to their innocence or guilt.

Lucille McLaughlin and Deborah Parry had been held in jail since their arrest following the murder of Yvonne Gilford in December 1996. McLaughlin, aged 32, from Dundee, and Parry, aged 39, from Alton, Hampshire, were charged with Gilford's murder on December 24, 1996. Gilford, a 55-year-old Australian, had arrived in Saudi Arabia several months before the British women to take a job as a senior theatre nurse.

The Saudi authorities said McLaughlin and Parry had confessed to the crime and admitted having a lesbian relationship with Gilford. But two weeks later the women withdrew the confessions, which it was later claimed were made under duress.

Parry maintained that she and McLaughlin had been sexually molested and beaten into confessing to the murder by Saudi police. They buried my eyes with cigarettes, hitting me across the throat and at the end of those four or five days it was easier to say we had done it,' she told the BBC.

Meanwhile the Saudi lawyer who represented the nurses during their 17 months in prison bitterly accused them of 'financial opportunism' and of contributing stories about their ordeal to the hands of Saudi police after the families of both nurses said their stories to British newspapers for six-figure sums.

In an extraordinary attack, Salah Al Hejailan insisted the British nurses had not been sexually abused or tortured in custody. Parry and McLaughlin had insisted the claim that they had been forced to confess because of huge financial incentives from newspapers, he said.

'The British media tempest that with money in an effort to undermine and cast doubt on the proceedings,' he said. 'This will not impress anyone who is reasonable.'

The pardon granted by King Fahd out of forgiveness... should not be undermined by the atrocious slander and financial opportunism we are witnessing in this sorry affair.'

The attack is the more woundling since it comes from the man who defended both women during their entire time in captivity, and who offered his services free of charge. Gilford's family was clearly angered at the nurses' release, and their lawyers called for the immediate payment of £1.7 million (£250,000) in compensation.

The victim's brother, Frank Gilford, said: 'I reckon they should honour their deal. I reckon we have behaved with the utmost of dignity.'

The money, ASI million of which Mr Gilford has promised to hos-

pital in his sister's memory, is held in a trust account in Adelaide. 'The two nurses now face a full investigation into the murder allegations against them that could last them being struck off the British nursing register.'

In what could, in effect, amount to the case being tried again, the United Kingdom Central Council of Nursing is preparing to launch an investigation after receiving a formal complaint against the nurses from the Labour MP for Glasgow, George Galloway. He said to was in the public interest that the body which oversees professional standards should act.

'Notwithstanding any opposition I have to the regime in Saudi Arabia, the facts are that the evidence against these women is extremely powerful and serious. Even though the conviction occurred during the time the very least be investigated before they are allowed to practice as nurses,' Mr Galloway said.

Although King Fahd commuted their sentences, their conviction still stands. The URCM may walk out after June 18, when McLaughlin is due to appear at Dundee Sheriff Court to face a criminal charge over the theft of £1,740 from a television set in 1986.

This was the reason she sought work in Saudi Arabia. Catherine Bennett, page 22

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In Brief

UNITED Nations legal experts in New York ruled that it was not, after all, illegal for Sandline, the company in dispute with the Foreign Office, to send weapons to the Nigerian peace-keeping force that restored the Kabbah regime in Sierra Leone.

JOHN ADEY, chief executive of the National Blood Authority, has been sacked as part of a drive to improve confidence in the service.

CHRISTOPHER HOWES, a British mine clearance expert kidnapped in Cambodia more than two years ago, has been murdered, the Foreign Office said.

Bristol prison is at the centre of three separate inquiries following the deaths of three inmates in as many weeks.

MIDLAND Bank faces a bill for damages and costs of up to £580,000 after five of its former keyboard operators won compensation for severe cases of repetitive strain injury.

RAILTRACK and the train operating companies were ordered to spend £250 million to safety improvements to protect the public and prevent accidents.

AFTER nine years and £500,000, the Department of Health published a report that it fervently hopes will end outcamps of a link between outcamps and mattresses.

EIGHT families who lost relatives to Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease after treatment with contaminated human growth hormone won the right to government compensation totalling more than £1 million in the High Court.

THE COMMONS will effectively be barred from attempting to reintroduce the death penalty after a majority of 95 per cent in a vote, elected to adopt a European protocol that places a constitutional bar on capital punishment.

WILLIAM John Hill, a cousin of the multiple murderer Fred West, was jailed for four years for sexual attacks on teenage girls in Herefordshire.

BRITISH beaches became dirtier than ever, and Blackpool was named as one of its eight beaches listed as unsafe for swimming, the European Commission reported.

WOLF MANKOWITZ, the actor, playwright and screenwriter, died aged 73. His work drew on his own life and his own childhood in the East End of London.

Ulster: the end of the beginning

ANALYSIS
John Mullin

THAT, believe it or not, was the easy part. Now the real battles begin, and Northern Ireland is braced for a dirty war. David Trimble, the leader of the Ulster Unionists, scored a resounding victory, and no one should take that from him. There were times, though, when it looked a distant prospect.

The wrath of Ian Paisley and Bob McCartney can be fearsome, and there were mutinous splits in Mr Trimble's party. Sinn Féin's cohesion sent shudders through the Ulster Unionist's Yes campaign.

The British and Irish governments hurriedly helped. The appearance of the Balcombe Street IRA gang at Sinn Féin's annual conference was an atrocious blunder. The parole of Michael Stone, the loyalist mass killer, was even worse.

Law-abiding nationalists viewed his crimes at least as seriously as those of the four members of the Balcombe Street gang, and it served only to fuel fears over the prisoners and the No lobby only just right for three days of the campaign. But they were the last three days.

Although the Yes campaign has scored a success, one can be sure whether most unionist voters backed the deal, and that leaves open the question of Sinn Féin's support for the Democratic Unionist Party and UK Unionists.

Take their figures first. They say that because unionists attracted 51 per cent of the vote in the past three elections, a 26 per cent No vote meant a majority of unionists rejected the deal. That assumes, heroically, a negligible nationalist No vote.

Mr Trimble defined it differently. He said that 62 per cent of the electorate was Protestant, so the No lobby needed at least 31 per cent. With 30 seats the No bloc 30 seats in the 108-seat assembly.

With 30 seats the No bloc 30 seats in the 108-seat assembly. It would mean that the DUP would demand that votes are taken on a cross-community basis. That means key decisions must be backed by a 60 per cent weighted majority of members. That figure must include at least 40 per cent of both unionist and nationalist members.

If Mr Trimble fails to ensure the selection of loyal candidates, several Ulster Unionist Party members might join with the DUP and UK



Ian Paisley: the fight for unionism is still alive PHOTOGRAPH BY ALAN BROWN

about coincided with the NIO's analysis. So Mr Paisley and Mr McCartney might have been cheered out of the King's Hall in Belfast last Sunday, but the fight for unionism is very much alive.

Sydney Elliott, professor of politics at Queen's University, calculates that a 26 per cent vote for the two parties on June 23 would create big difficulties for Mr Trimble. That would give the unionist No bloc 30 seats in the 108-seat assembly.

With 30 seats the No bloc 30 seats in the 108-seat assembly. It would mean that the DUP would demand that votes are taken on a cross-community basis. That means key decisions must be backed by a 60 per cent weighted majority of members. That figure must include at least 40 per cent of both unionist and nationalist members.

If Mr Trimble fails to ensure the selection of loyal candidates, several Ulster Unionist Party members might join with the DUP and UK

Unionists in some votes. Mr Trimble would be left with a constant headache, developing perhaps into paranoia.

However, the Sunday Times will poll Mr Trimble more confident than Prof Elliott's doomsday scenario. Had the new Northern Ireland assembly been elected last week, it indicates that the DUP would have taken 18 seats and UK Unionists one.

Mr Trimble's Ulster Unionists are — on 31 seats played as the biggest party by a resurgent SDLP with 32. Sinn Féin is on 15; the Alliance pact, the Progressive Unionist Party and one each for the Ulster Democratic Party and the Women's Coalition.

After the elections, the assembly's first function will be to decide who the first minister and first deputy minister are in the power-sharing executive. They will be

elected on the basis of parallel consent — by a majority of both unionist and nationalist.

But if that sounds sticky, the assembly's next job appears impossible: to form the 15-member power-sharing executive. Each party will be allocated places in proportion to its size in the assembly. It will also have to agree to a duty of restraint. That is designed to stop the DUP wrecking the cross-border dimension, and it is difficult to see how it could form part of the cabinet.

But Sinn Féin will have two seats; the IRA will not have decommitted any of its weapons; and Mr Trimble has pledged never to sit with Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness until it does.

Mr Blair did much to reassure unionist doubters he was serious that the IRA had to decommission. No doubt he is, but the agreement offers no guarantees.

It is difficult to imagine ways out of this impasse. Unionist doubters are uneasy that there was never any linkage of the effective amnesty programme to decommissioning. But the legislation for the accelerated release of paramilitary prisoners is seen to go through the Commons. That seems now settled.

The thorny question of IRA reform is on the back burner. Chris Patten, the former Hong Kong governor, will come up with his recommendations in a year's time.

Should the executive get up and running, it will have until October 31 to agree what cross-border bodies should be set up. If it fails to do so — and that is a real possibility — the intergovernmental nature of the agreement would effectively scupper the assembly.

A British-Irish council seems the least controversial element. It will include representatives from Westminster, the Irish parliament and the Scottish and Welsh assemblies. There will be a long period in which the assembly shadows the six existing Northern Ireland departments. Assuming all crises are negotiated, legislation will establish the assembly and transfer powers from London in January.

That is way beyond the horizon. Last Saturday's result was hardly the end or its beginning. But it was the end of the beginning.

Comment, page 12

Arts Council in revolt

Stuart Miller

A HIGH-PROFILE resignation and the threat of more to come: in Arts Council terms, weeks like this are rare. It is a sign of the norm as the open revolt which has engulfed it since it embarked on radical reform continues to escalate.

The arts establishment is braced for yet more resignations after Lady McMillan quit as chairwoman of the council's dance advisory panel in disgust at reform proposals which critics claim pose a direct threat to the relationship between the council and the organisations it funds.

Her resignation came two days after the 15 members of the drama advisory panel resigned en masse in protest at reform proposals.

They are furious that the council's new chairman, Gerry Robinson, and his chief executive, Peter Hewitt, are to press ahead with reforms which will see the chairman of the

11 advisory panels lose their autonomous seats on the council.

The chairman of the 10 regional arts boards will also go, to be replaced by a streamlined council of 10 'generalists' who will have no specific links to any particular art form.

The aim is to make the council function more efficiently by removing the vested interests believed to have clogged up the decision-making process.

There have been frequent clashes between arts organisations that the council, which distributes £400 million in grant and lottery money annually, has become so unwieldy and bureaucratic that it cannot function effectively.

But while representatives of the individual art forms agree that change was long overdue, they have accused the Government of 'handcuffing the arts over the years' while experienced figures working in the arts were frozen out.

Jakarta cancels water deal

John Aglionby in Jakarta and Nicholas Bannister

THAMES Water International became the first foreign casualty of Indonesia's campaign to strip away the nepotistically acquired assets of former President Suharto's family this week when it lost its contract to supply water to half of Jakarta.

Less than three days after Mr Suharto resigned, PAM Jaya, the water regulator for the Indonesian capital, cancelled its co-operation agreement with PT. Kakar Thames-Airindo (KTA), a joint venture between Thames and the former Suharto's eldest son, Sigit Hardjadinata.

The regulator, the municipal water authority that organised the supply until Kati won the contract, said the agreement had been reached improperly. 'It was not fair business but

monkey business from start to finish,' said PAM's managing director, Rama Boedi. 'There was no tendering of the contract whatsoever. The whole process was a classic example of nepotism and nepotism overriding all other considerations.'

The company that was awarded the contract to supply the other half of the city, the French firm Lyonnaise des Eaux — owner of Northernumbrian Water — also had its contract cancelled.

A Thames Water spokesman said 'It is a country where the way to do business involves influence, and the influencing lines are now changed.' A £25.3 million scholarship fund to help Asian students at British universities will be announced this week by the Foreign Office. But the agreement had been reached improperly. 'It was not fair business but

Support grows for single currency

Alan Travis and Michael White

SUPPORT in Britain for the single European currency, the euro, has risen sharply in the last month, according to the latest Guardian/ICM opinion poll. Although Euroscepticism still commands substantial backing in Britain, it has fallen below a majority of 50 per cent for the first time after dropping 13 points in the last month.

Support for the euro has risen by eight points, to 34 per cent — its highest level for three years.

The change of heart appears to have been influenced by the announcement by the 11 other European Union partners that they are definitely joining the single currency next year.

The gap between pro- and anti-euro camps is narrowed if the "don't know" — many of whom would be

expected to become No votes in the promised referendum — are excluded, giving figures of 58 per cent for the ayes and 42 per cent for the nays.

For the first time there is now greater support among Labour voters for the euro than those prepared to vote against. Britain joining (43 per cent to 38 per cent). Opposition among Tory supporters stands at 60 per cent, but is down from the 73 per cent registered last month.

There is a strong gender difference on the issue. Men now split on whether to join the single currency, with 43 per cent opposed and 41 per cent in favour. Scepticism is much stronger among women, who say that they will vote not to join by 53 per cent to 29 per cent.

Signs that opinion may be on the move will give comfort to ministers who have adopted a "we might join, but not yet" position. The strong current Euroscepticism in the elec-

torate has led the Government to put the question of the single currency referendum firmly on the back-burner.

But as this latest poll shows, the further the rest of the EU travel down the road to the single currency, so opposition to the euro in Britain may well weaken.

Meanwhile the Conservative leader, William Hague, revealed the depth of his hostility to further European integration when he warned that the single currency represents "1950s solutions for the problems of the 1940s", and could wreck the stability of the entire continent.

"The single currency is irreversible. One could find oneself trapped in the economic equivalent of a burning building with no exits," he predicted in terms which delighted his Eurosceptic supporters and horrified the beleaguered pro-single-currency wing of his party.

Speaking last week in Fontainebleau, outside Paris, Mr Hague argued that the pro-euro consensus in favour of economic, strategic and political integration in Europe was outdated in a globalised hi-tech world — along with the interventionist "big-state" mindset which accompanied it.

His speech prompted a scathing backlash from the Conservative former deputy prime minister, Michael Heseltine. "He is in danger of losing a very important part of the Conservative party — the centre ground — and you can't win unless you come from the centre ground," he said.

In contrast to Tony Blair, who is courting EU leaders and British public opinion in favour of eventual membership of the euro, Mr Hague ended a day of talks with President Jacques Chirac and other French leaders by lecturing in favour of "diversity, pluralism and the nation state."

Waiting lists for hospitals hit new high

David Brindle and John Gair

HOSPITALS were last left given 10 months to cut the waiting lists dramatically, as the total for England hit a new high, fractionally below 13 million.

Health leaders said meeting the targets would mean opening operating theatres at night all week-long.

The targets are the means by which ministers hope to honour their commitments to get the list below the level they set in 1997, next March — a cut of 10,000 — and then to achieve a further cut of 100,000 before the next general election.

The Department of Health said more than one in five of all the waiting had been given a date for treatment. Compared with a year previously, however, the total list was up 12 per cent.

Stephen Thornton, chief executive of the NHS Confederation, which represents health authorities and trusts, said the £200 million provided by the Government is cutting waiting lists "means we have to work extra hours and weekend, providing services, nurses and technicians to work extra hours and find enough hospital beds at community nurses to care for people at home after an operation".

He warned: "The intense focus on waiting lists risks skewing clinical priorities and draining resources from other areas of the NHS, the high-quality cancer and mental health services, that people also care deeply about."

A day after the Department of Health announced lengthening of waiting lists, the Department for Education and Employment released figures showing worsening overcrowding in the early years of primary school.

"The Government reaffirmed its cure manifesto commitment to eliminate overcrowding in the face of the disturbing evidence in the last five to seven years in classes of 31 or more has grown to record proportions since the election."

It blamed the result on the Tory government's final public spending settlement which determined health education authority budgets in the spring of 1997 and influenced by Mr Blair's election victory.

The charges relate to the two men's accounts of who paid for Mr Aitken's weekend stay in the Paris Ritz Hotel in 1983, when Mr Aitken was defence minister.

A draft statement by Mr Aitken, leaked to the Telegraph, sets out in detail Mr Aitken's supposed MIB activities, which were apparently committed at by John Major, then prime minister, and Sir Colin McColl, the former head of MIB.

Lord Pearson claimed that Mr Aitken's evidence about who paid his Ritz bill was at the instigation of the Saudis. The rightwing Conservative peer also suggested that the former minister met MIB's Middle East intelligence director 11 times.

Yet in a letter to the Times last October Mr Aitken dismissed the idea that he worked for British intelligence as a "dodgy suggestion". Referring to the former cabinet secretary, he wrote: "Sir Robert Armstrong gave me written confirmation of the fact that I had never been involved in work for MIB."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
May 31 1999

Files that hide a chaotic immigration system

Alan Travis examines a process that condemns thousands of refugees in Britain to years of misery

AN AMBITIOUS and rising young Home Office minister, Mike O'Brien, this month gave the first real hint of how Britain's Labour government intends to deal with an immigration system it has already condemned as being a complete shambles. The heart of that crisis lies in the backlog of about 76,000 asylum seekers who are waiting, some for years, for a final decision to be taken on their cases. The worst are to be found among the thick pile of paper files in the civil service filing cabinets marked "Tubby Files" in offices at London's Heathrow airport.

Nearly 10,000 of these people have been waiting since 1992 to learn their fate. Mr O'Brien confirmed this month that families whose cases had not been resolved within seven years of their applications to stay would be considered for "exceptional leave to remain" in an attempt to give the Immigration and Nationality Department time to sort out the backlog.

Despite accepting that the system has been reduced in a shambles, ministers are keen to resist calling it "chaotic". Mr O'Brien's statement is an "admission" because they believe that would be seen as rewarding law-breakers and might encourage others to abuse the system and undermine Britain's asylum procedure.

They are already extremely nervous about how his statement will play. Ever since the election, planned news stories have appeared in the rightwing press designed to demonstrate that Labour is tough on immigration. In June last year the Daily Mail said its readers "Saw" (Home Secretary Jack Straw) set to kick out thousands of illegals. "At the same time the Daily Telegraph proclaimed on its front page: 'Labour to send back 50,000 migrants.' Earlier this year the Mail On Sunday even erroneously claimed that a blanket amnesty for a presumably different 50,000 people was being planned.

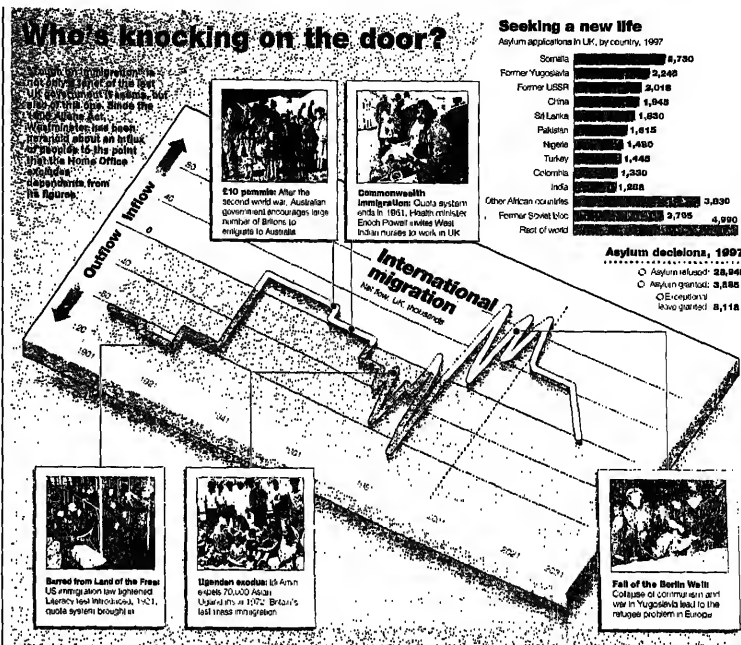
Ministers have openly started to prepare the ground by pointing out publicly that the Conservatives left themselves "exceptional leave to remain" (ELR) to 15,233 people in many teachers were in their posts when the census was taken in January.

The effect of Gordon Brown's budget — including £222 million to build 600 extra classrooms — will not be felt until the start of the next school year in September.

Stephen Dwyer, the school standards minister, said Labour's manifesto promise to limit all infant classes to 30 or fewer would be achieved by September.

"We can guarantee to parents that this is the final chapter in the age of ever-increasing infant class sizes," he said. "The book is now closed on infant classes being more a question of crowd control rather than a valuable learning experience," he said.

There were more than 1.4 million primary school children in England in 1993 or more. The proportion has risen steadily, from under 24 per cent in 1960 to 30 per cent now, as public funding failed to keep pace with the growth in pupil numbers.



MPs stand up to child labour

Lucy Ward

MULTINATIONAL companies last week admitted they had no specific rules to prevent child labour and in some countries could not guarantee equal opportunities for women.

Four global giants — BP, Shell, Rio Tinto and Unilever — came under pressure from MPs despite insisting that they stand on human rights and in some cases forced them to sacrifice business.

The Commons foreign affairs select committee called for evidence as part of an inquiry focusing on foreign policy and human rights.

Sir John Stanley, Conservative MP for Tonbridge and Malling, pressed the companies on whether they insisted on a global minimum age for employment.

Richard Newton, BP's director for Europe, admitted that the firm, which has workers in more than 70 countries, had no worldwide minimum age applied across the board. But he said: "We do through our support of the UN Declaration on Human Rights, and the recognition that the use of child labour is an abuse of human rights, respect that, and we would want to implement that in all our operations."

Cue Walker, UK national manager of Unilever, which employs 250,000 people outside Britain, including tea plantation workers in Kenya and Sri Lanka, said the firm's lack of a minimum age policy was an "area of concern".

The corporations said they were obliged to respect religious laws and customs while in some countries outlawed women's employment.

All four insisted their subsidiaries did not offer bribes to secure business and said their ethical stance had, in some cases, lost them business.

Robin Aram, head of external affairs at Shell, which does business in Nigeria, pointed out: "Speaking up on human rights does not come without cost."

Partners in crime, page 23



Sitting comfortably... A solid cast-iron figure, one of 600 installed at the Royal Academy courtyard in London by Angel of the North sculptor Antony Gormley. The figures, moulded from the artist's body, give the impression of the aftermath of an urban disaster in a work called Critical Mass. PHOTO: MARTIN GORMLEY

Spy claim gives twist to Aitken affair

Luke Harding and David Pallister

THE Jonathan Aitken affair took a bizarre turn last week when it was claimed that the former cabinet minister lied over his Paris Ritz bill to conceal his role as a secret government intelligence intermediary.

A lengthy report in the Daily Telegraph under the headline, "I lied for my country, says Aitken", appeared on the day that he was charged with perjury and perverting the course of justice.

The decision to prosecute followed the collapse of his libel action against the Guardian last year and the arrest of ex-MP Sir John Grieve, a close friend of the Lebanese-born businessman Said Aitken, who is also charged with perverting the course of justice.

However, despite the clear involvement of Mr Aitken and his friends in the 5,000-word Telegraph story, he then rebutted the claim in subsequent letters to the Times and Telegraph, and said reports that he had lied for his country were only a

mitigating factor rather than a defence against the accusations.

His evidence in his libel case was to prevent intelligence links from being exposed, the Telegraph explained in an article by Mr Aitken's friend, Lord Pearson.

But Mr Aitken later said: "Although Lord Pearson's article fairly interprets my original motives for declining the Guardian, I have never suggested, nor will I suggest, that this explanation is anything other than a mitigating factor. I have no intention of using it as a defence to the allegation that I told a lie on oath during my libel case."

In his letter to the Times, Mr Aitken repeats that he would not use the intelligence connection in his defence, but only to say that it could be a mitigating factor.

These developments came after the Crown Prosecution Service announced that Mr Aitken faced criminal charges after an 11-month police investigation. The former minister and Said Aitken were charged with conspiracy to pervert the course of justice and perverting the course of

justice. Mr Aitken was additionally charged with perjury.

The charges relate to the two men's accounts of who paid for Mr Aitken's weekend stay in the Paris Ritz Hotel in 1983, when Mr Aitken was defence minister.

A draft statement by Mr Aitken, leaked to the Telegraph, sets out in detail Mr Aitken's supposed MIB activities, which were apparently committed at by John Major, then prime minister, and Sir Colin McColl, the former head of MIB.

Lord Pearson claimed that Mr Aitken's evidence about who paid his Ritz bill was at the instigation of the Saudis. The rightwing Conservative peer also suggested that the former minister met MIB's Middle East intelligence director 11 times.

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John Gormley

Eyes on the Irish prize

THE FUTURE took on the past in Northern Ireland — and won. Ranged on one side were the bitternesses of a 30 years' war, the memories and hurt that refused to go away. Ranged on the other were fatigue with a futile conflict, the realisation that no one could ever win the battle of Ulster and that it was best for the two communities who share that land to live in it together. On one side were Ian Paisley and his prophets of doom, bellowing a loud, long No. On the other was perhaps the unlikely coalition ever assembled: Sinn Féin and the Ulster Unionists, U2 singer Bono and a former chief constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Bill Clinton and William Hague, Richard Branson and the Balcony Street gang, Tony Blair and the loyalist prisoners of the Maze. They all said yes to the Good Friday agreement, and last weekend's referendum result saw them recruit the most crucial ally of all to their coalition: the people of Northern Ireland themselves. More than 70 per cent said the word loud and clear: Yes.

There are disputes as to the exact proportion of unionists who voted that way. The Paisleyites bend the figures to argue that the 71-to-29 per cent victory margin means a majority of unionists voted No. David Trimble reckons the number of unionist realists is closer to 35 per cent. Since people did not cast their votes with colour-coded ballot papers of orange and green, we shall never know for sure. But maybe we don't need to. For one thing, as Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, pointed out after hearing the result, a 3-1 victory hardly needs a replay. More deeply, if the people's verdict means anything, it surely reveals a desire to escape from the old sectarianism.

So what happens next? Next month Northern Ireland voters go to the polls again, to elect the new assembly approved by the referendum. The politicians of the province must be the most exhausted in the democratic world: no sooner had they finished the almost interminable task that culminated in agreement, than they were plunged into a long referendum campaign. Now they have to find new energies — to win a role in Northern Ireland's first step at self-rule in a generation.

Sinn Féin showed its usual political guile by stalling first. Gerry Adams's offer of an electoral pact with the SDLP was briskly snubbed by John Hume — who believes he needs no help from anybody after polling polls that tip his party to be the largest single entity in the new body. Still, he risked looking narrow and partisan while Mr Adams scored PR points by casting himself as a

Quiet triumph for democracy

EVERYONE can take satisfaction from the Hong Kong election and the support for democracy most of all. The results showed a shadow of doubt that where the voters can cast their votes directly, the great majority will choose candidates who are committed to a fully democratic system. This belief for the one-day election of the Legislative Council chosen by direct elections is the only sure rest of Hong Kong public opinion. It has produced a resounding victory for Martin Lee, his Democratic party, and the outspoken independent associated with the same cause. And it is a result that the Chinese government, now in more forward-looking mood, would be well advised to consider positively.

In doing so, Beijing has legitimately regard the result as a success for its policies too. What better proof that it is honouring the "one country two systems" arrangement than an election won — in the area directly contested — by some of the Chinese government's most outspoken critics? Of course there has been some flitting towards Beijing by the Hong Kong elite — just as it used to tilt towards London. There is also more self-censorship in the Hong Kong press, although a good deal of criticism continues to be expressed. But Chinese officials have refrained visibly from interfering in Hong Kong, and the notion abroad that "things have changed" irreversibly is simply not true.

Hong Kong's chief executive, Tung Chee-hwa, is not entitled to claim the election a success. The complex electoral system he introduced was gener-

ally regarded as a disincentive to vote. It was taken almost for granted that the poll would barely make the 35 per cent of registered voters in the last, British-run election of 1995. Yet Hong Kongers defied both predictions and torrential rain to turn out in numbers far greater than were ever achieved under British rule. Some of those voters may have been cast to punish Mr Tung for rewriting the electoral system, but they were still expressing a view that, in the first election under Chinese rule, Hong Kongers had a duty to make it a success.

Will China and the Hong Kong establishment be able to resist the temptation to set up a new system of ageing conservatives in Beijing who throw a fit at the mention of Mr Lee, and who cannot forget that the students in Tiananmen Square were calling for democracy too. Tung Yik-ang, the independent-minded leader of the pre-Chinese Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB), offered some good advice to such people. He hoped China would learn that "democratic elections don't necessarily lead to chaos for a country or to discontent between the elected people and the government".

The issue now is the timetable for the transition to a Legislative Council which is fully chosen — in the area directly contested — by some of the Chinese government's most outspoken critics? Of course there has been some flitting towards Beijing by the Hong Kong elite — just as it used to tilt towards London. There is also more self-censorship in the Hong Kong press, although a good deal of criticism continues to be expressed. But Chinese officials have refrained visibly from interfering in Hong Kong, and the notion abroad that "things have changed" irreversibly is simply not true.

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Chaos at the shrine of Crocodile Hole

Martin Woollacott

CROCODILE HOLE is the civilisation name of the place near Jakarta where six Indonesian generals were murdered in the failed coup attempt that led to the replacement of Suharto by Habibie.

After the troubles, it became a shrine. Visitors remove their shoes before passing in front of the site, showing the war against the Dutch. Sukarno studying a book while plotters lurk in the background, the generals being tortured by communist women and the arrival, in the nick of time, of General Suharto and his armed forces. The relics do not allow the later massacres of several hundred thousand followers of the communists, many of them killed by young Muslim activists. But they are a powerful statement of the basic principle of his regime, which is that Indonesian society, because of its ethnic, religious, and class divisions, will, if left to itself, collapse into anarchy and even civil war.

The difficulties of speaking frankly in an unfree society, and perhaps some Japanese preference for indirectness, have meant that these matters have for years been discussed in a strange jargon made up of acronyms and generalities.

Concepts such as "Sara", for example, which is shorthand for "Suku, Agama, Ras, dan Etnika", the ban on provoking ethnic, racial, religious, or class tensions, abound. The journalist Groussman, who has written a number of essays called A Thousand Slogans, and One Poem, in which he deplored the way in which the regime's propaganda had made everything into a dull code. Yet it is a code that has some meaning. Pancasila, the founding Indonesian ideology, combines belief in God, humanitarianism, national unity, consensus democracy, and social justice. It is a stumbling intellectual structure within which factions inside the regime, its defenders and critics have for years manoeuvred. This with the counterpart of violence on the streets and the regime's own violence against its opponents, has been Indonesian politics under Suharto.

Whether those politics have prepared the country for a transition to a more democratic system or whether they have damaged that possibility is a question the next few months will answer. Suharto has left a legacy of division on two levels. His kind of development widened the gap between the classes, and, in his collapse, has damaged all of the very rich. His kind of politics has left a legacy of distrust between groups and institutions, notably the military and one wing of politically active Muslims. The divisions could dangerously interact.

At Suharto's coronation in the 1945 generation passed into retirement, the armed forces took the lion's share of important civil posts and of the economic resources. The generals remained privileged and important, but had clearly lost ground. Suharto had already buttressed his position on the economic front by an alliance with Chinese-Indonesian entrepreneurs. Later he reinforced his position

politically by encouraging a business movement that co-operated with the regime. Members of that movement, embodied in the Indonesian Intellectuals' Association (IKI), founded in 1980, sought to assist Suharto even as he used his. Their hope was, by penetrating the government, to create a Islamic society. Other Muslims, including the prominent Indonesian businessman, Abdurrahman Wahid, criticised this programme, thus denying the real objective of an Islamic state.

Some IKI members also took the idea of proportionality in a government, meaning that Muslims should get the 30 per cent of government and civil service posts which their proportion of the population "entitled" them, and of a motive action in the economy meaning that Muslims should get a helping hand from state-owned businesses, not the private sector.

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France ran covert operation in Rwanda

Jacques Lemaire

SENIOR French general has admitted that France ran a covert operation in Rwanda between 1990 and 1993 to help the Kigali army cope with attacks by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

General Christian Quenou, who was President François Mitterrand's chief-of-staff at the Elysée palace, was part of the special unit that managed crises in Africa. Testifying on May 19 before the parliamentary commission looking into French involvement in the Rwandan war, he said that before Operation Turquoise France had trained the regular Rwandan army (fostering 5,200 men in the early 1990s) in the use of armoured vehicles, commando and helicopters.

At the height of what was known as Operation Monrovi, which involved sending two French companies to Rwanda in 1990 and 1993 to ensure the safety of foreign interests, France assigned military units to the Rwandan army for day with the Rwandan army command and the presidential office, where the operation was managed by a crisis group that included General Théodore and Colonel Jean-Pierre Huchon.

The commando structure was dismantled just before April 1994, when France had to rush a 400-strong force of paratroopers to evacuate about 1,500 French and other foreign nationals from the country as the RPF advanced on Kigali.

The unit was gradually expanded, and the new mission was named Operation Panda. At the end of 1992, the number of officers assigned to Panda was doubled, and 40 more were added in the following year. The detachments came mainly from three regiments forming the Rapid Action Force.

The task of these new arrivals was, bluntly, to support the Rwandan army in two training camps located close to the Ugandan border in the north, near the front line. These officers were to train soldiers in the use of armoured vehicles and 105mm guns.

Equipped for night fighting and possessing powerful long-range transmitters, these men were to remain in constant touch with the highest political and military authorities in Paris, who were managing the crisis in Africa. They could, if necessary, bypass the usual chain of command.

This is precisely what happened in Rwanda a direct, coded line of communication was established between the regiment on the ground and the Elysée via the army command and the presidential office, where the operation was managed by a crisis group that included General Théodore and Colonel Jean-Pierre Huchon.

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'Go to the river bank and wait till it gets dark'

'Sir, your right arm hasn't been blacked up'

Detachments taking part in the Panda mission were suspected of exceeding their brief and crossing into Uganda, as some commando troops later boasted. In search of evidence of Rwanda's military involvement with the RPF, eye-witnesses have reported that they saw French soldiers, rather than Rwandan soldiers, in the jungle near Kigali.

Panda also provided the French with an opportunity to cooperate with the Rwandan secret service, which used photographs and documents purporting to show RPF atrocities against the people and the

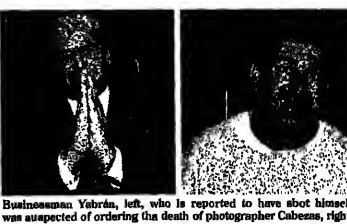
presence of regular Ugandan army soldiers in Rwanda. The French also provided the Rwandan secret service with an opportunity to cooperate with the Rwandan secret service, which used photographs and documents purporting to show RPF atrocities against the people and the

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Death adds to murder mystery plot

Christina Lagrand in Buenos Aires

ARGENTINES are bewildered by the death on May 20 of Alfredo Yabrán, aged 58, a shadowy figure and one of the country's most powerful businessmen. He was suspected of ordering the death of photographer Cabezas, right



but both government and opposition are reacting cautiously pending confirmation by a post-mortem examination of the police inquiry's preliminary findings.

Domingo Cavallo, an opposition member and a former economy minister who was Yabrán's sworn enemy, nevertheless declared that the businessman had long "benefited from the protection of judges, police and [President] Carlos Menem's government".

It was Cavallo who, in 1995, focused public attention on Yabrán by accusing him of an open Congress sitting of being the "head" of a criminal organisation modelled after the government. Cavallo, who had been serving as a minister since 1991 and was perceived as the architect of the country's economic recovery, was dismissed in July 1996 by Menem.

Meanwhile an issue of Noticias magazine carried a cover photo of Yabrán, nicknamed "The Invisible Man" because he went to such pains

to stay out of reach of the photographer's lens. The picture showing Yabrán and his wife strolling along Plaza de Mayo was the first time the businessman's picture had appeared in the press, and was credited to José Luis Cabezas. Ten months later, the photographer was dead.

Argentine society was deeply moved by the killing which, in view of a presidential election scheduled for 1999, triggered an out-and-out war between Menem and Eduardo Duhalde, governor of Buenos Aires province. After several members of the provincial police force were implicated, Duhalde had to order a drastic purge of the security services.

The investigations also revealed the possible involvement of a group in which police officers worked alongside bodyguards employed by Yabrán. At the time, the governor advised Yabrán to "get himself a good lawyer".

Yabrán, like Menem of Syrian

origin, has succeeded in keeping his personal history and business affairs shrouded in secrecy. He is said to have been worth \$500 million. But what were his relations with the government? That is a question which is likely to remain unanswered.

The failure of the political community, kept under tight control in Suharto's time, to come up with proposals for a society matching the people's expectations has led to the responsibility for such an onerous task being laid at the door of the leaders of the Muslim community — as much as the same was as it was for Poland's Roman Catholic Church in the last days of communism. But much may also depend on support such a transformation receives from abroad.

The role played by the United States in helping to ease tensions in Indonesia and the lack of determination that it and the rest of the international community are showing in other unstable situations makes for a striking contrast. In the case of Argentina, the proof positive that an internal crisis likely to have potentially worrying international repercussions can be influenced by external power.

It wouldn't be a bad thing for the US, and the West in general, to remember that when dealing with the Middle East or China. Do suffering communities have to wait for an economic crisis that threatens the stability of a region, and perhaps the global market, before the rest shows any concern?

(May 22)

Dictatorship not yet dead in Indonesia

EDITORIAL

THE dictator has gone, but can his dictatorship survive? This is the big question the Indonesian people will have to settle if they are to wrench themselves free of Suharto's poisoned legacy. After 32 years of absolute rule, the general/president has stepped down in a manner that is, at least, less dramatic than the bloody circumstances in which he came to power.

The violent incidents of recent days, evoking memories of the anti-Chinese massacres in the 1960s, have hastened the emergence both in Indonesia and abroad, of a peaceful scenario designed to stave off the worst — at least for the time being. But will it remain peaceful? Indonesia has the misfortune of being a country that can incur extreme violence beneath a bewitching exterior.

The solution that has been adopted — annulling Suharto's election poll victory to succeed him — is probably just his short-term not to be unsatisfactory. The man is finished, but his system lives on. The job of making the country democratic, if only in the long run, is a task of international standards of plurality and freedom, has yet to be started.

It is up to the Indonesians to establish the basis of a state where the law prevails and which is likely to antedate the expectations of the world's most populous Muslim nation. In such an undertaking, religion can play a more positive part than at first glance seems possible.

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(May 22)



'Suharto, Inc.' Comes Under Scrutiny

Keith B. Richburg in Jakarta

AS EX-PRESIDENT Suharto last week began the life of, as he put it, "a simple citizen," Indonesians faced a new and potentially wrenching question: what to do about the billions of dollars in wealth amassed over three decades by Suharto, his children and his cronies?

A large part of Suharto's mixed legacy to his country is a massive, far-flung business empire, sometimes referred to as "Suharto, Inc.," controlled by his six children, a half-brother, and a host of other relatives, friends, associates and assorted hangers-on.

The Suharto children are all reputed to have become multimillionaires by trading on their direct line to the presidential palace, involved in everything from clove cigarettes to toll roads, from petrochemical plants to automobile manufacturing. So pervasive is the first family's reach into the Indonesian economy that a long-running joke here is that the corruption begins as soon as you arrive in Jakarta's international airport. You can buy a pack of cigarettes, hop in a taxi, take the toll road to the city and check into a hotel, putting money into a Suharto family member's pocket with each step.

Several family members head their own business conglomerates. Son Bambang is at the top of the Bhintra group, which produces the Cakem automobile, owns newspapers and broadcast outlets and is involved in petrochemicals, a gas pipeline and the major stake in the Grand Hyatt Hotel.

A younger son, Runtu Mandala Putra, or "Tommy," runs the Humus group, with investments in telecommunications, the clove monopoly, and a competitor local car, the Timor. Daughter Siti Harjanti Rukmana has the Cakra Lintang Group, which has built toll roads and other facilities, and is involved in power stations and transportation projects.

And the children aren't the only ones. Suharto's half-brother Sud-

wikatmono is into banking, monopolizes wines here through his control of the import of films and all the theater chains, and has a variety of restaurants, supermarkets and hotels. And a Suharto grandson, Arif Sigit, is getting into the act, with retail outlets, a share in a water distribution company in Jakarta, a share of tax collection on alcohol sales, and the lucrative monopoly for export of birds' nests, which are used in Chinese food dishes around the region.

The blatant use of the family connection to win a commanding slice of the national economy has made the Suharto relatives the object of widespread hatred — more so, it seems, than Suharto himself. During the violent outbreak in the capital on May 14, rioters targeted the most recognizable symbols of the first family's wealth, including offices of Bambang's Baranata company and Tommy Suharto's Timor showrooms.

Suharto himself has always lived modestly, largely shunning Indonesia's official presidential palace, Merdeka, and remaining at his comfortable house in the Candana district. He has never been known to dress in fancy clothes or wear expensive jewelry. Still, he is reported to be one of the world's wealthiest individuals, with Forbes magazine calculating that he is the sixth-wealthiest person in the world, with a net worth of \$15 billion. The Suharto family was listed as worth a total of \$30 billion.

Much of Suharto's own wealth is generated on an extensive network of charitable foundations he heads. Money raised by the charities has been used to support the political operations of the ruling Golkar party. Critics have called for investigations into whether Suharto has transferred his wealth to secret bank accounts in Europe.

For the young protesters whose bold "people power" movement toppled Suharto's carefully constructed New Order regime, seizing at least some of the first family's wealth and returning it to the nation's cash-

trapped treasury is now the unfinished part of their revolution.

"I don't agree with this resignation," said Benny, 19, a technical school student from Trisakti University. "His children are still the heads of businesses. They must be charged, brought to court."

Arif Nurhadi, 25, an economics student, noted that "first and foremost, the wealth must be nationalized. That wealth belongs to the people."

Some financial analysts said that even if a future Indonesian government decided to seize the children's assets in publicly listed companies, minority shareholders likely would be unaffected. One view is that if it alone, the Suharto children will fall victim to market forces. And even after the crisis eases, they will have lost their connection to the presidential palace, and thus their ability to make new money.

A federal judge ordered a Secret Service officers last week to reveal what they know about President Clinton's relationship with Monica S. Lewinsky, denying direct warnings that such news would jeopardize the safety of the president by destroying their ties in the agency who guard him.

Chief U.S. District Judge Kenneth H. Polak, who has ruled with independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr in several recent decisions that Secret Service personnel are obligated as law enforcement officers to turn over evidence to a criminal probe and refused to make a special "protective" finding that would exempt them from the law.

The judge said the decision will have serious ramifications at the child's trial for being "so lax" to safety considerations and seeking the testimony.

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Under Ernesto Samper's pressure, President Ernesto Samper dissolved the 20th Intelligence Brigade last week because of evidence it was responsible for a series of murders of politicians and human rights activists.

The Special Forces training program has survived the vicissitudes of U.S.-Colombian relations, including Clinton's "declassification" of the country for its poor anti-narcotics efforts in 1996 and 1997, which triggered a ban on military equipment transfers and all U.S. military training except by the Special Forces.

There has intensified and Washington debates how to oppose drug trafficking from the world's top cocaine producer, where all centers of power — the military, the government and the guerrillas — have been tainted by the drug trade. While the United States is reluctant to get involved in counterterrorism operations, the line between the narco-traffickers and the guerrillas has blurred.

Senior administration officials said an across-the-board assessment of Colombian policy is underway, involving the State Department, Defense Department and Intelligence Community, because of a consensus that Colombia, the hemisphere's second-oldest democracy, is facing an escalating threat to its stability.

In recent months, the two Marxist guerrilla movements have inflicted heavy losses on government troops and now control about 50 percent of the country. A recent Defense Intelligence Agency report estimated the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has 15,000 troops and the National Liberation Army (ELN) has 5,000 troops, a substantial increase from a year earlier.

The training program has quietly proceeded in Colombia as a civil war

time Indonesia-winner, speaking anonymously.

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In Brief

FOR THE first time, a new Samli security official last week publicly absolved Iran of involvement in the June 1996 bombings, U.S. military housing complex killed 19 American service personnel, blaming the attack on Iranian-backed Shiite militias.

Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Saudi interior minister, told a Kuwait newspaper that the kingdom "took place at Saudi hands" after "No foreign party had any role."

Nayef's statement, containing long-standing suspicions in Washington that the attack was carried out by Shiite Muslim extremists with support from Iran's radical Islamic government.

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Brand Loyalty

Some call burning flesh a 'rite of passage.' Others say it's an ugly throwback to slavery. But it's a hot fashion statement, writes Lonnæ O'Neal Parker

Brand Loyalty

IMAGINE a carefully fashioned coat hanger, slow-coated over the blue-green flame of a Magic Chef range, leading for the fleshy equine of your upper arm, your chest or the side of your thigh.

For a fraction of a second, you can feel the heat before it touches your skin. Your heart races and instinctively you want to draw back. But you don't. Because you want your brand to be sweet. Or if you think you'll move, you brace yourself, holding onto a sink or table, or perhaps you get somebody else to hold you down.

And then the "hit," a quick "passage." Or maybe it's a "circle" or "pop." They say it doesn't really hurt. But the smell of burning flesh can be weird. Especially when it's yours.

Many people watching this year's NCAA Final Four tournament might think the blue horsehoe-shaped scar on the arm of University of North Carolina's Shammond Williams, Michael Jordan's brother, is his chest, is more disconcerting. Dallas Cowboys' Emmitt Smith sported a brand on his arm for a 1993 cover of Sports Illustrated. Other folks have Greek letters melted into their calves or scented into their forearms.

Although doctors warn there can be complications — infection, excessive scarring, designs gone awry — even though some 100,000 people get branded, for some brands, it's a rite of passage.

In the 1930s, branding has become a typical form of gang "tagging," says Michael Borrero, a professor and director of the Institute for Violence Reduction at the University of Connecticut, who has worked in gang outreach for more than 30 years. "It's a ritual to say we are brothers, we are sisters, you are officially part of us," Borrero says.

Michael Lyles, 35, a Washington child welfare attorney who also heads his own Maryland law practice, has studied the historical origins of fraternity branding and its relation to African sacrificial practices and says burning carries a symbolic that crosses many cultures.

"Historically, branding probably came in vogue in the 1950s and 1960s," he now calls the practice barbaric.

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ny, since spring of last year, and he's got three brands — double, interlocking Omegas on his chest, and a large Omega with a small Greek A inside, for Alpha chapter, the middle of his left arm. Of his initiation class of nine men, all chose to get branded, and it was the second time an organization had made a permanent impression on him.

Sherman is reluctant to show the three-inch, five-point star that rides high on his left hip. He got that one at 13 to mark his membership in the Black Greek Disciple Nation, a group in his Akron, Ohio, home town. "The way our sect ran, you could get yelled in or beat in, I got beat in. Then there's celebrating with drink and it was branded the day after with thick paper clips."

Sherman credits the pre-college program Upsilon Beta and rites of passage activities in high school with turning him from his gangster ways. He entered the University of Akron at 16 and transferred to Howard a year later.

After joining the fraternity at Howard, he says, "Initially, I wasn't going to get a brand, but I thought about it and equated the whole fraternity life as another rite of passage. This was more ritualistic and traditional than the juvenile self-mutilation. This brand wouldn't be like it was in a gang, it had deeper meaning, more history, more pride."

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Myyucca Sherman, right, shows off his Omega Psi Phi brand along with a Howard University fraternity brother. PHOTO: ROBERT A. REEDER

1980s," says Lyles, an Omega since he was 17 who has brands on his right biceps and over his heart. "I took on a kind of widespread usage — mainly among the Omega first, then the Kappa (Kappa Alpha Phi) and Alpha (Alpha Phi) fraternities began to do it also. One of the things that I guess solidified branding as something to do is the things that our fraternity is based on — manhood, scholarship, etc. It seemed to signify the 'Oh, the day I did this' of it all, because supposedly you can't remove it."

In one scene from the 1988 Spike Lee movie School Daze, a girl is shown making a brand on the chest of a brother from the fictitious Gamma Phi Gamma fraternity. Duane Fliley, 27, a fourth-grade teacher at James McHenry Elementary School in Lanham and a member of Kappa Alpha Phi fraternity, acknowledges wryly that, for some reason, women seem to find his scar compelling. Still, Fliley, who has a diamond with a K inside branded on the left side of his chest, now says he regrets having it done.

"I was young and thought it was a cool thing to do," Fliley says. "I was like 'I'm in Florida, I can have my shirt off and the babes will look at it.' Women are into that. The brand, the first... it was a conversation piece, they wanted to touch it."

"Historically, branding probably came in vogue in the 1950s and 1960s," he now calls the practice barbaric.

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A hard driver on the road to peace

The Northern Ireland Secretary has taken great risks to bring peace to the province. Julia Langdon finds the keys to her courage

SHE can walk into a men-only bar in a working men's club in her Redcar constituency, march up to the counter, pick up someone's glass and drink his beer. That is the equivalent of sacrifice in these parts, but there isn't so much as a murmur. And in the soulless heart of a Belfast ghetto she can put her arm round the wife of a Maze prisoner, stroke her baby, then casually take a bite out of the child's sandwich. He actually stops crying, possibly from sheer surprise.

While the infant doesn't realize he has lost part of his lunch to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, his instinctive reaction is similar to that of anyone else.

"She just has this way," says Brian Roberts, leader of Redcar and Cleveland Council, who was Mo Mowlam's first agent and the man inadvertently responsible for putting her into the House of Commons. "It doesn't matter whether you're Lord So-and-so or whoever up here, she just has this way of coming across."

Mowlam is suitably dismissive about the extent to which her character, personality and style contribute to her evident success as a politician, although any observer can see that while she has a sure touch with people that she undoubtedly is not a natural politician. She is well liked, but the word she usually uses about herself is "pragmatic".

"At school I wanted to be a medical doctor but I did the wrong O levels," she says. "Looking back now, with a better understanding of myself, it was because being a doctor is practical, because it gets results. I like things that are concrete, specific. When I go home at the weekend and have a spare couple of hours, I do one of two things: I put the clothes in the washing machine or I fill the dishwasher." It drives her husband, Jon Norton, mad, she says blithely, for she is clearly accustomed to driving people mad.

"He looks at me and says 'You don't have to do that.' But I just want to get results. And an hour later when he's back, he's saying 'She's brilliant, triumphantly. That's what it's all about, in Northern Ireland particularly. What she seeks for people's lives there is normality.'"

Mowlam is an academic, but not ideological. She lectured in politics at Newcastle university for four years until 1983, then moved to adult education at Northern College, Barnsley, because she had a sense that she would be able to achieve more there. Her mother, Tina Mowlam, says she got fed up teaching politics to kids who were never going to use it. Instead she wanted to help people who had never had a decent chance.

Marjorie Mowlam may be interested to learn that she is very vague about this — that she was born in Welford in 1949. Her mother says so: Tina is one of the few people to use her middle child's



Mo Mowlam: 'She deals with men very effectively without losing her femininity' PHOTOGRAPH BY GISPIN RODWELL

given name. She became "Mrs" from Mowlam — was a short form of Marjorie — when she was at secondary school. (Her late father, Frank, went by the same nickname at work in the Post Office.)

There is a lot of her father in her. For one thing the phenomenal memory for names. She usually attributes this to a bit of parrot work as a telephoneist at a telephone exchange in Coventry department store, but Tina says it is inherited, and adds: "Frank's gift was that he was very good with people. He never closed his office door. He was always available — now flat sounds like Marjorie, doesn't it?"

Frank never had the chance to develop his skills, however. Tina thinks he was a thwarted man. He passed for the grammar school, but his father wouldn't let him go. He said that what had been good enough for him was good enough for his son. Frank left school at 14 and became a telegraph boy at Welford, but he had a great stubbornness. It was 'I'll do it, even if you don't help me do it'.

He succeeded in working his way upwards through the Post Office hierarchy, but he was an alcoholic; he didn't work for some years before his death in 1981. There were many problems when the three children — Jean, Marjorie and Jimmy — were small. Money was always short. "It was tough," says Tina. "There was always a disaster waiting around the corner. You'd think you were OK, and then you'd find that the mortgage hadn't been paid."

The influence of an alcoholic parent on the children can be considerable. The angry aunt Virginia Ironside wrote recently that it had turned her, like many others, into "a compulsive carer". Interesting, then, that if Mo Mowlam ever leaves politics she says she would like to provide respite care for families with disabled children.

'I like things that are concrete, specific. When I go home at the weekend and have a spare couple of hours, I do one of two things: I put the clothes in the washing machine or I fill the dishwasher'

Despite her father's drink problem, there were happy times, too. After Richmond Drive, Welford, they lived beside the canal in Shalesbury Avenue, Southall. There were picnics in the park, outings to Bosworth Beaches. It wasn't easy, as if life was made of ice and would melt if he looked away. But the cause of the breakdown is said to have been her intense commitment to her work and her "child-blindedness" — her inability to recognise quite the extent to which his children mattered to him.

If that was the case, it is not an error she has repeated. She adores Jon's two children, relishes the time she spends with them but is typically pragmatic about the circumstances. "I'm not responsible for children or dentist appointments," she says. "I just get the pleasure of their company."

THE difference between opposition and government, Mowlam says, is what she is able to offer people. She used to have constituents in her surgeries who couldn't pay their electricity bills and to whom she could only offer the political equivalent of an Elopianist: could the church help? What about a forced charity? "Now we're going to do it properly, which is why I'm pleased with the welfare crap," she says, pausing only to murmur that it could have been better preserved.

Across the bloody history of the past 30 years in Northern Ireland there have been myriad suggestions about possible ways forward from the intractable political stalemate. But it is only once the appointment of the first woman secretary of state, someone who is clearly tough, but also vivacious and egalitarian, that the character of the incumbent can now be seen as having been such a vital part of the dramatic progress that has been made.

The former Labour leader Neil Kinnock first put Mowlam in the Opposition front bench as spokeswoman for Northern Ireland in 1988. He describes her strength as being "inclusive". She is also strong, "tongued tough," he says.

But her own vulnerability, as a result of the brain tumour from which she was freed after surgery shortly before last year's general election, is perhaps also a part of this complicated equation.

The tumour, the size of a small orange, was in the left-hand frontal lobe of her head. When it was diagnosed at the beginning of last year she told Tony Blair, her husband and his daughter Harriet, and they went out as planned to see a film. There was an anxious period before analysis revealed that the growth was benign. She underwent radiotherapy and steroid treatment, which led to her weight gain. It was only last July that she was given the all-clear. Her hair is now growing back, messy and curly, but a considerable surprise.

There are not many who dissent from the view that it is the personality of Mowlam which has been crucial to the course of the last year in Northern Ireland, and there are some who believe it is the primary reason that the Good Friday agreement was even possible. Lord Lindsay, her private secretary in the Northern Ireland Office, who also served her Tory predecessor, Sir Patrick Mayhew, is a convinced admirer of the woman who has been so central to the peace process.

Although Kinnock was a civil servant, he is prepared to be quoted on the subject. "We wouldn't have got where we are without her," he says. "She's got a way of making other people wouldn't have done."

She is not without her critics of course. Most of these are to be found among the Northern Irish unionists, some of whom have found her difficult to deal with, claiming that she has conceded too much to Sinn Féin. Some are equally hostile to her role in the Unionist Party. "She's a liar," says one Unionist Party member. "She's a liar," says another. "She's a liar," says a third. "She's a liar," says a fourth. "She's a liar," says a fifth. "She's a liar," says a sixth. "She's a liar," says a seventh. "She's a liar," says an eighth. "She's a liar," says a ninth. "She's a liar," says a tenth. "She's a liar," says an eleventh. "She's a liar," says a twelfth. "She's a liar," says a thirteenth. "She's a liar," says a fourteenth. "She's a liar," says a fifteenth. "She's a liar," says a sixteenth. "She's a liar," says a seventeenth. "She's a liar," says an eighteenth. "She's a liar," says a nineteenth. "She's a liar," says a twentieth. "She's a liar," says a twenty-first. 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So much telly and so little sex

ink in charge

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Out for a ruddy duck

Mark Cocker

THE white-headed duck is not a pretty bird. On seeing some in Spain I couldn't help thinking that they looked as if they'd enjoyed a long career in boxing. The male has a large bulbous white head, whose main purpose seems to be as a counterbalance to an equally swollen black bill. The two together give it a magnificent ugliness, rather like the faces of some 17th century Hapsburg monarchs.

Whatever its aesthetic qualities, the white-headed duck is a wonderful symbol of Spanish conservation. From the 1930s this species crashed to a world population of just 15,000, spread thinly from Kazakhstan to Iberia. By 1977 the Spanish birds were down to just 22 and looked to be heading for extinction. But a concerted campaign by Spanish environmentalists have seen it expand today to more than 1,000, and they continue to spread outwards from an original Andalusian stronghold.

Unfortunately, the duck is now encountering a fresh challenge, not from habitat destruction, pollution, or overhunting — the factors elsewhere that maintain the bird's presence on a list of globally threatened species. In Spain the principal threat is from the bird's New World counterpart, the ruddy duck.

Sharing the same white face, blue bill and sticky-up tail of its European sibling, the ruddy duck is an escapee from wildfowl collections in England. Over the past 80 years this exotic American has built up a population of several thousand, and the British increase has been the pride to a colonial expansion.

The problem arises when these colonists arrive in white-headed duck country, because the two species readily interbreed. Being more aggressive and more flexible in its habitat requirements the ruddy duck has a competitive advantage, and the fear is that eventually it could genetically absorb its rare relative and hybridise into extinction — as happened in New Zealand where the indigenous grey duck was swamped by the introduced mallard.

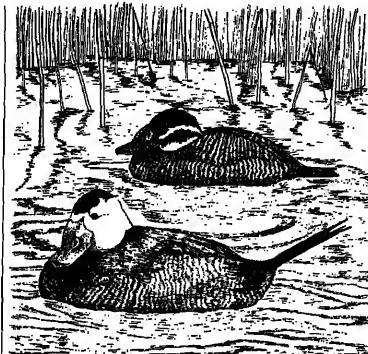


ILLUSTRATION: ANA HENRY

Zealand where the indigenous grey duck was swamped by the introduced mallard.

To date only 50 ruddy ducks have been seen in Spain, but since 1993 they have turned up every year. There have also been more than 40 hybrids. These birds have been eliminated, the cull was complicated and expensive and the Spanish difficulties can only multiply as ruddy ducks increase.

Many argue that the answer, like the problem lies in Britain, the main source of Europe's ruddy ducks. The Wildlife and Wetland Trust, the UK's foremost organisation in the conservation of ducks and geese, is one of the bodies prepared to contemplate a radical cull of British ruddy ducks in order to safeguard the white-headed duck in Spain. On the face of it, this makes perfect sense. The British government is obliged through several European Union directives to help conserve European biodiversity, and

the white-headed duck is one of the continent's most threatened birds. By contrast, the ruddy duck has a growing North American population of more than 600,000.

While the conclusion to be drawn looks obvious, not everyone can agree. The proposed cull of the cull is more than \$160,000, and some argue that there are higher priorities for Britain's conservation funds. Others see the suggested slaughter of this 'unwanted' alien as a kind of eco-fascism, and condemn the idea on moral grounds.

And while the white-headed duck is a symbol for Spanish environmentalists, some British bird groups have adopted the ruddy duck as their own emblem. All these conflicting sensitivities have confused the issue and brought it to a temporary stalemate. Meanwhile Spanish conservationists are having to patrol their wetlands each winter anxiously watching for the American invader.

Chess Leonard Barden

CAPPELLE LA GRANDE in northern France is the fastest growing open in Europe. Entries have quadrupled over a decade, and the 1998 edition had nearly 200 GMs and IMs among 637 players. Tie-breaks were used to split equal scores, just as well in a tournament where 29 players scored 7/9 or 8/9.

Russia's Igor Glik finished with the heap with 7/9. You have to be a tough cookie to be sole winner in Cappelle, and Glik revealed in Rochade Europe that he has used the McCutcheon French as a surprise weapon since 1984 without losing a single game with it at regular time rate. Here Canada's No 1 is already outplayed.

K Spraggett v I Glik

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Bb4 5 Bxc6 Bxc6 6 Bb5 Bc7 7 Bxc6 Bxc6 8 Bb5 Bc7 9 Bxc6 Bxc6 10 Bb5 Bc7 11 Bxc6 Bxc6 12 Bb5 Bc7 13 Bxc6 Bxc6 14 Bb5 Bc7 15 Bxc6 Bxc6 16 Bb5 Bc7 17 Bxc6 Bxc6 18 Bb5 Bc7 19 Bxc6 Bxc6 20 Bb5 Bc7 21 Bxc6 Bxc6 22 Bb5 Bc7 23 Bxc6 Bxc6 24 Bb5 Bc7 25 Bxc6 Bxc6 26 Bb5 Bc7 27 Bxc6 Bxc6 28 Bb5 Bc7 29 Bxc6 Bxc6 30 Bb5 Bc7 31 Bxc6 Bxc6 32 Bb5 Bc7 33 Bxc6 Bxc6 34 Bb5 Bc7 35 Bxc6 Bxc6 36 Bb5 Bc7 37 Bxc6 Bxc6 38 Bb5 Bc7 39 Bxc6 Bxc6 40 Bb5 Bc7 41 Bxc6 Bxc6 42 Bb5 Bc7 43 Bxc6 Bxc6 44 Bb5 Bc7 45 Bxc6 Bxc6 46 Bb5 Bc7 47 Bxc6 Bxc6 48 Bb5 Bc7 49 Bxc6 Bxc6 50 Bb5 Bc7 51 Bxc6 Bxc6 52 Bb5 Bc7 53 Bxc6 Bxc6 54 Bb5 Bc7 55 Bxc6 Bxc6 56 Bb5 Bc7 57 Bxc6 Bxc6 58 Bb5 Bc7 59 Bxc6 Bxc6 60 Bb5 Bc7 61 Bxc6 Bxc6 62 Bb5 Bc7 63 Bxc6 Bxc6 64 Bb5 Bc7 65 Bxc6 Bxc6 66 Bb5 Bc7 67 Bxc6 Bxc6 68 Bb5 Bc7 69 Bxc6 Bxc6 70 Bb5 Bc7 71 Bxc6 Bxc6 72 Bb5 Bc7 73 Bxc6 Bxc6 74 Bb5 Bc7 75 Bxc6 Bxc6 76 Bb5 Bc7 77 Bxc6 Bxc6 78 Bb5 Bc7 79 Bxc6 Bxc6 80 Bb5 Bc7 81 Bxc6 Bxc6 82 Bb5 Bc7 83 Bxc6 Bxc6 84 Bb5 Bc7 85 Bxc6 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Bxc6 1010 Bb5 Bc7 1011 Bxc6 Bxc6 1012 Bb5 Bc7 1013 Bxc6 Bxc6 1014 Bb5 Bc7 1015 Bxc6 Bxc6 1016 Bb5 Bc7 1017 Bxc6 Bxc6 1018 Bb5 Bc7 1019 Bxc6 Bxc6 1020 Bb5 Bc7 1021 Bxc6 Bxc6 1022 Bb5 Bc7 1023 Bxc6 Bxc6 1024 Bb5 Bc7 1025 Bxc6 Bxc6 1026 Bb5 Bc7 1027 Bxc6 Bxc6 1028 Bb5 Bc7 1029 Bxc6 Bxc6 1030 Bb5 Bc7 1031 Bxc6 Bxc6 1032 Bb5 Bc7 1033 Bxc6 Bxc6 1034 Bb5 Bc7 1035 Bxc6 Bxc6 1036 Bb5 Bc7 1037 Bxc6 Bxc6 1038 Bb5 Bc7 1039 Bxc6 Bxc6 1040 Bb5 Bc7 1041 Bxc6 Bxc6 1042 Bb5 Bc7 1043 Bxc6 Bxc6 1044 Bb5 Bc7 1045 Bxc6 Bxc6 1046 Bb5 Bc7 1047 Bxc6 Bxc6 1048 Bb5 Bc7 1049 Bxc6 Bxc6 1050 Bb5 Bc7 1051 Bxc6 Bxc6 1052 Bb5 Bc7 1053 Bxc6 Bxc6 1054 Bb5 Bc7 1055 Bxc6 Bxc6 1056 Bb5 Bc7 1057 Bxc6 Bxc6 1058 Bb5 Bc7 1059 Bxc6 Bxc6 1060 Bb5 Bc7 1061 Bxc6 Bxc6 1062 Bb5 Bc7 1063 Bxc6 Bxc6 1064 Bb5 Bc7 1065 Bxc6 Bxc6 1066 Bb5 Bc7 1067 Bxc6 Bxc6 1068 Bb5 Bc7 1069 Bxc6 Bxc6 1070 Bb5 Bc7 1071 Bxc6